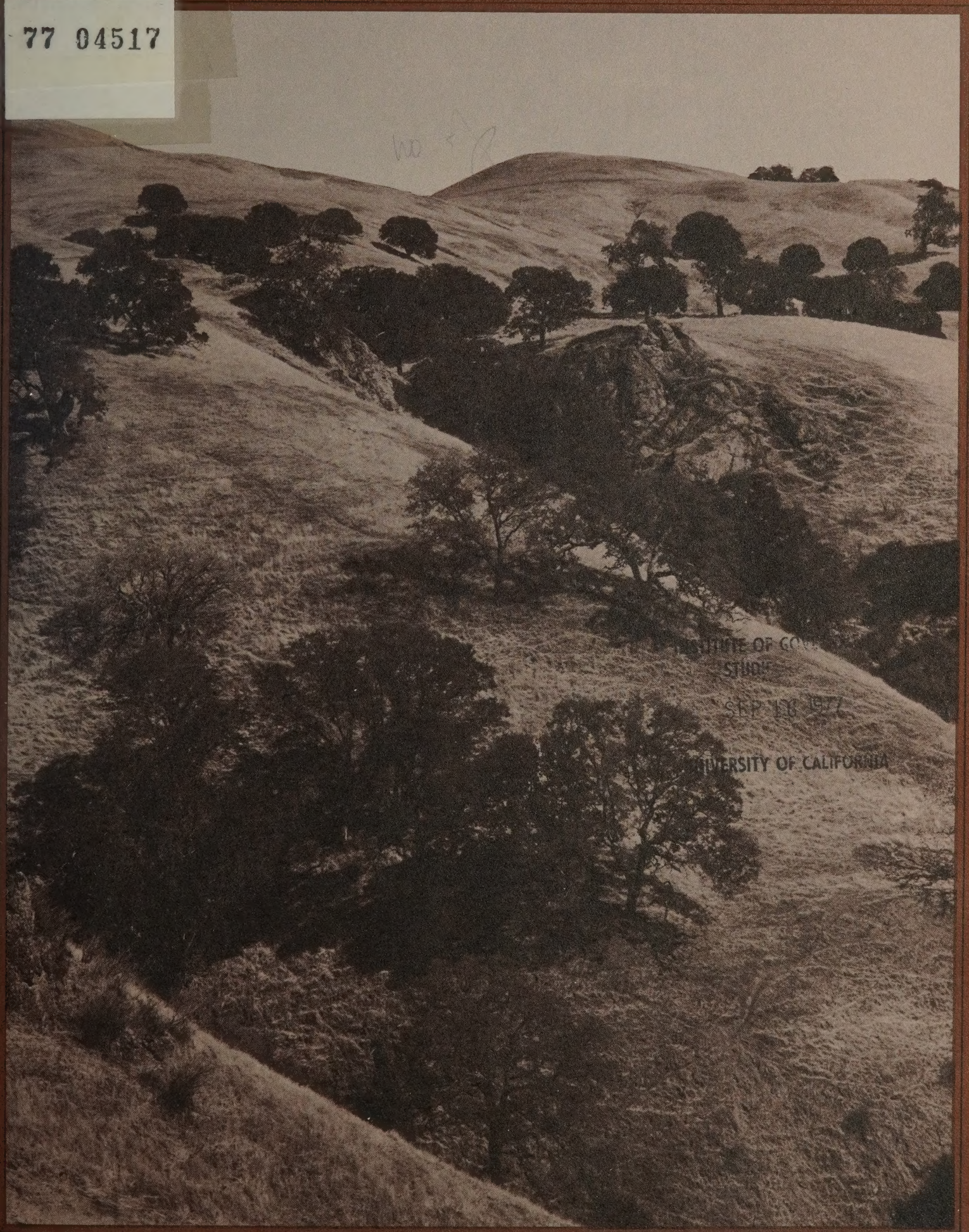


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# *Ridgeland's Administrative Board*

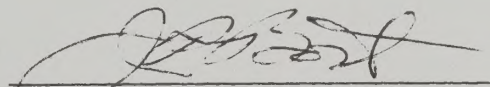
## PARTICIPATING JURISDICTIONS, RIDGELANDS STUDY:

On behalf of the Ridgeland's Administrative Board, it is with great pleasure that I hereby transmit to your jurisdiction the Ridgeland's Study, adopted by the Board on May 19, 1977. The report represents the synthesis of diverse viewpoints as expressed by citizens and agencies with interest in the resources which the Ridgeland's offer.

It is hoped that the information and conclusions contained in the Ridgeland's Study will be of use in the future planning and management of this area. Each agency will want to ponder the report's recommendations and the most appropriate methods to ensure their implementation.

Citizens of the East Bay can be grateful to all participants in the researching and writing of the Study. Their efforts have demonstrated once again the ability and willingness of the East Bay community to work together on issues which transcend jurisdictional boundaries.

Very truly yours,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Joseph Bort

Enclosure

*Land Util. East bay area*





# *Ridgeland A Multijurisdictional Open Space Study*

MAY 1977

Report Prepared by:

Alameda County  
Contra Costa County  
Santa Clara County  
East Bay Regional Park District  
Association of Bay Area Governments  
Bureau of Outdoor Recreation,  
Pacific Southwest Regional Office



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Dan McCorquodale, Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors  
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# RIDGELANDS STUDY AREA









# *Recommendations for the Ridglands*

## PLANNING AND SPECIAL STUDIES RECOMMENDATIONS

*Alameda, Contra Costa and Santa Clara Counties, plus affected cities:*

1. Continue to designate the Ridglands area as open space in adopted general plans.
2. Review adequacy and update, where appropriate, those general plan elements related to the identification, protection and preservation of the open space resources of the Ridglands; specifically, the open space, conservation, recreation, scenic highways, seismic safety and safety elements.
3. Conduct studies and adopt policies regarding the impacts of power transmission lines and communication facilities, (radio transmitters and antennas) and pipelines on the scenic resources of the Ridglands. Identify suitable corridors and sites for the above facilities so as to minimize the impact on resource values.
4. Conduct studies to determine the severity of problems caused by overgrazing. Consider the adoption of policies which will prevent future problems associated with overgrazing.

*Alameda County:*

1. Designate the Vallecitos Valley and the surrounding hills for agricultural or other open space uses as part of the Livermore-Amador plan amendment consideration.
2. Walpert Ridge and other nearby ridges should be placed in agricultural or open space designation in Union City and Hayward.

*Contra Costa County:*

1. Review the Circulation Element of the County General Plan to reconsider planned new routes through the Ridglands.

*Santa Clara County:*

1. In the County General Plan, change the term "permanent open space", being applied to privately owned lands in the Ridglands, to one which more accurately conveys the level and duration of the open space protection.

## URBAN DEVELOPMENT POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

*Alameda, Contra Costa, and Santa Clara Counties, plus LAFCO and the affected cities and appropriate special districts:*

1. Confine urban development within and adjacent to existing urban areas and outside of the Ridglands.
2. There should be consistent, strict application of open space plan policies in the Ridglands. Rezoning, variances and other exceptions that allow small lots, residential uses or other incompatible activities should be discouraged.
3. Each county and its cities should work closely with LAFCOs and Special Districts to assure that open space land use policies for the Ridglands are implemented uniformly in the actions taken by each.
4. Sphere of influence or urban service area boundaries, as adopted by LAFCO, should not be extended further into the Ridglands.
5. Areas outside adopted sphere of influence or urban service area boundaries should be detached from cities and districts providing the urban services, particularly sewer and domestic water.
6. City annexations should not be approved by LAFCO outside of sphere of influence or urban service areas.

7. Jurisdictions responsible for providing urban services and facilities should use sphere of influence or urban service area boundaries as a basis for planning and constructing these urban facilities.
8. Utilities, special districts and public agencies should recognize the growth-inducing impacts of their actions and actions which stimulate urban growth in the Ridgелands should be given careful consideration.

#### REGULATION RECOMMENDATIONS

##### Zoning:

*Alameda, Contra Costa and Santa Clara Counties, plus affected cities:*

1. Review permitted uses and densities within existing open space zoning districts and delete those which are not in conformity with the adopted open space element of the general plan and with the open space resource values of the Ridgелands.
2. A basic minimum lot size of 100 acres should be considered in agricultural and grazing areas in the Ridgелands.
3. Review current zoning policies of all lands under Williamson Act contracts and change those which are inconsistent with the preservation of grazing in the Ridgелands.
4. Zoning on the periphery of existing public parklands in the Ridgелands should be consistent with the management objectives of those public areas.

*Alameda County:*

1. Alameda County should review definitions and interpretation of "outdoor recreation facility" in its A (Agricultural) zoning district. Guidelines should be developed for appropriate placement and regulation of intensive uses in the category.
2. Cities should apply large lot zoning regulations to lands within the Ridgелands. A basic minimum lot size of 100 acres should be employed by the agricultural or open space district.

*Contra Costa County:*

1. New open space zoning district or districts should be developed which would specifically pertain to all open space uses (e.g., agriculture, grazing, recreation, mining, quarrying, watershed, and wildlife habitat). A basic minimum lot size of 100 acres should be used for agriculture and grazing. Smaller minimum lot sizes might be used for other open space uses and to accommodate present parcel size distribution.
2. Use of the A-2, General Agriculture and F-R Forestry Recreation District in the study area should be reconsidered and reduced or eliminated after the adoption of the new open space zoning district(s).
3. Properties with zoning not in conformance with the general plan should be rezoned to a district which conforms to planned open space land use.
4. Permitted uses in the A-4 District should be expanded beyond commercial agriculture to include other open space uses.

##### Other Land Use Regulation:

*Alameda, Contra Costa and Santa Clara County, plus affected cities:*

1. Consideration should be given to restricting division of lands under Williamson Act contracts.
2. All cities and counties should adopt or revise grading ordinances to protect Ridgелands open space resources.



3. *Require design review in the Ridgelande for all proposed development within adopted corridors adjacent to designated scenic highways.*
4. *Consideration should be given to the adoption of regulations to protect scenic values of prominent ridgelines and slopes visible from urban areas.*
5. *Adopt regulations to protect streamside resources.*
6. *Additional rural residential development which is dependent upon wells and septic tank systems should be strictly regulated.*
7. *Additional roads in the Ridgelande should be discouraged. Road improvements should be at the lowest level necessary for maintenance of public utilities or for conducting ranching operations or for providing access to public parks.*
8. *The East Bay Regional Park District, the Santa Clara County Park and Recreation Department and other public park agencies should become more actively involved in evaluating development activity and land use proposals around parklands.*
9. *The East Bay Regional Park District, the Santa Clara County Park and Recreation Department and other public park agencies should review their acquisition, development and management programs to minimize their impacts on adjacent agricultural lands.*

#### PROPERTY TAX RELIEF RECOMMENDATIONS

*Alameda, Contra Costa and Santa Clara Counties, plus the affected cities:*

1. *The counties should continue to encourage the use of Williamson Act contracts in the Ridgelande to protect grazing lands and other significant open space resources.*
2. *The counties and cities should make use of open space easement contracts in appropriate locations in the Ridgelande.*
3. *Assessments on grazing lands under Williamson Act contracts should be changed from a per acre basis to one based on an established maximum number of Animal Unit Months (AUM) for each parcel.*

#### PUBLIC ACQUISITION AND MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

*East Bay Regional Park District, Santa Clara County and other agencies responsible for managing public park and open space land:*

1. *The East Bay Regional Park District and Santa Clara County should continue to acquire parklands in the study area in conformance with their adopted plans.*
2. *High priority in park acquisition in the Ridgelande should be given to those lands with recreation potential nearest to the urban fringe. High priority should also be given to the acquisitions of lands which will protect the viewsheds and watersheds of existing public parklands.*
3. *Public access to lands acquired for public park purposes should take place within a reasonable period of time following acquisition.*
4. *The management and development plans for public parklands in the Ridgelande should be mitigated to reflect the presence of adjacent privately-owned grazing lands.*
5. *Maintain or increase existing funding levels of the regional and local park agencies in the Ridgelande for acquisition, development and maintenance.*
6. *Public park agencies in the Ridgelande should link up existing park units by establishing trail corridors for hiking and riding use. These trail corridors should be planned and designed so as to minimize the adverse impact on adjacent privately-owned lands.*
7. *Park and recreation and other public land managing agencies with holdings in the Ridgelande should coordinate their planning and acquisition programs with each other so as to more effectively serve park, recreation and open space needs.*

9. *Park and recreation agencies in the Ridgeland, in consultation with the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, should make available information describing the potential tax benefits available to landowners through a gift or sale at less than fair market value to a public park and recreation agency.*
9. *Park and recreation and other public land managing agencies in the Ridgeland should increase their public information, education, signing and patrol programs so as to reduce trespass and vandalism problems on adjacent private lands.*
10. *Public access for outdoor recreation on publically-owned non-park open space lands shall be allowed, provided such use is not incompatible with the primary purpose for which these lands are managed.*
11. *Lands in public ownership in the Ridgeland should be protected by the public agency owning them rather than by imposing special restrictions on adjacent privately held lands.*

#### OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

1. *Farm Advisors, Agricultural Commissions and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Soil Conservation Service should work with ranchers and public land managers to help assure land management consistent with good conservation practices.*
2. *Mineral extraction, if it is to take place in the Ridgeland, should occur in a manner which will not impact substantially upon recreational and agricultural uses. Where such activities are allowed, reclamation should occur progressively with mining and be consistent with the State Surface Mining and Reclamation Act and local policies for the Ridgeland.*
3. *Local plans and programs should be consistent with regional resource concerns as expressed in the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) Regional Plan and detailed in its "Areas of Critical Environmental Concern" report.*
4. *ABAG should delineate regionally significant areas of critical environmental concern in the Ridgeland.*
5. *Local and regional agencies should continue to cooperate in discussion of issues of mutual concern affecting the Ridgeland.*
6. *Consideration should be given by local governments to provide ranch and farm lands protection from vandalism and trespass, in as much as owners of such lands presently are likely to be taxed for more services than they receive.*
7. *With respect to government's role in the management of private agricultural lands, government should encourage good management practices, but should not interfere with private activities unless resources are threatened.*

#### STATE OF CALIFORNIA

1. *Legislation should be enacted enabling LAFCOs to review proposed formation of special assessment and improvement districts by county boards of supervisors.*
2. *Legislation should be enacted to provide Alameda and Santa Clara Counties with the powers to regulate proposed developments on lands owned by the San Francisco Water Department which would negatively impact open space resource values of the Ridgeland.*
3. *The State should continue to implement its acquisition plans for Mt. Diablo and Henry W. Coe State Parks.*
4. *The Open Space Easement Act of 1974 should be amended to provide for subvention payments to local governments by the State.*
5. *The State should conduct a comprehensive study of inequities in the taxation of agricultural lands.*



## *Chapter One*

## *Introduction*







## *Chapter One - Introduction*

The Ridgeland is a name given to those portions of the Diablo Range immediately to the east of San Francisco Bay, within Contra Costa, Alameda, and Santa Clara Counties. This vast mountain area is a dominant feature of the region's landscape, playing a major role in making the Bay Area the unique and beautiful place that it is. It encompasses more than 1300 square miles (850,000 acres) of essentially open space\* lands, lying adjacent to an urban area housing more than three million people. Its contribution to the region's quality of life is significant.

As the flat lands of the Bay Area have been covered by urbanization, most of these grass covered, rolling hills have survived largely unspoiled, providing a scenic counterpoint to the urban area. Green during the winter and spring, golden brown in the summer and fall, the Ridgeland affords visual and psychological relief from the often frantic pace of life in the urban area.

In recent years, however, pressures and proposals for development in the Ridgeland have increased significantly, presenting the threat of loss or serious degradation of this important open space resource. As the threat of loss has increased, so too has public pressure for governmental action to protect the area's open space values. The three counties with land use jurisdiction over the Ridgeland--Alameda, Contra Costa, and Santa Clara Counties--have taken a variety of actions aimed at protecting these resources. Most of their land use plans and policies recognize the importance of and the need to protect the Ridgeland's diverse open space resources and values. Some of these current plans and policies stand in marked contrast to those which were in effect even as recently as five years ago. In addition to the plans and policies of local governments to protect the open space values of the Ridgeland, a substantial amount of open space is in public ownership as parks, watershed, and public domain (see Composite of Protected Lands Map).

Despite these recent efforts by local governments to preserve the Ridgeland as open space, there are still many who doubt whether existing local plans, policies, and programs are adequate to save the area for the benefit of present and future generations. They feel that unless additional steps are taken, important parts of the Ridgeland will be lost forever to urban development or low density rural residential sprawl.

Some of those who are most deeply concerned about the future of the Ridgeland feel that local governments may be either unable or unwilling

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\*Open space is defined by the State of California (Government Code Section 65560) as land or water that is essentially unimproved and devoted to an open space use. Specific open space uses are defined in the Appendix at the end of this report.

to take the steps necessary to provide long term or permanent protection for the open space resources of the Ridgeland. They fear that political considerations may prevent adoption of strict open space policies or may eventually weaken existing policies. Consequently, they have proposed that the State and/or Federal governments become more directly involved in the preservation of the Ridgeland--just as has happened in numerous other instances where local governments have failed to act as responsible stewards for the natural resources under their control (e.g., the California coast, San Francisco Bay, and Lake Tahoe).

Efforts to involve the Federal government resulted in legislation being introduced in 1974 by Congressman Fortney Stark calling for the U.S. Department of the Interior to undertake a feasibility study for the establishment of a national park or recreation area in the Ridgeland. The study bill also called for findings with respect to alternative means of protecting the area, consistent with existing ownership patterns. Similar studies in the past conducted by the Interior Department's Bureau of Outdoor Recreation (BOR) have led to the establishment of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area and the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge.

It was, however, the very existence of these other major Federal open space areas in the Bay Area which made it seem unlikely that Congress would authorize creation of others in the region. Establishment and maintenance of these existing areas has been expensive for the Federal government and substantial additional Federal funds will be needed to complete proposed acquisition and development. While the Bay Area has been fortunate to receive a somewhat disproportionate share of available Federal funds for these areas in the past, it does not seem realistic to assume that Congress would appropriate funds for another such area in the Bay Area when most other major metropolitan areas of the country do not yet have any at all. Recognition of this fact led the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation and the East Bay Regional Park District, with the support and advice of key local government officials in Alameda County and elsewhere, to propose this Ridgeland Study involving Alameda, Contra Costa, and Santa Clara Counties, BOR, the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD), and the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG).

A unique and important aspect of this study is the different perspectives these participating agencies bring to this study effort. Agencies vary considerably in the degree of authority they can bring to bear on development decision in the Ridgeland. The State of California has given local governments the capability to regulate and acquire land, and to tax property. The East Bay Regional Park District is able to acquire land and to levy a tax within most of Contra Costa and Alameda Counties for the specific purpose of providing park and recreation facilities. ABAG is a designated areawide clearinghouse for the nine county Bay Area; it reviews local applications for Federal funds, as well as environmental impact statements for significant plans and projects in the region. ABAG may aid member governments to coordinate local planning concerns that impact other jurisdictions. The Department of the Interior's Bureau of



Outdoor Recreation, in addition to administering grants from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, provides planning assistance to state and local agencies.

The Ridgелands contain numerous natural resources worthy of attention; however, each resource is not necessarily of equal importance to the involved agencies. The three counties' concerns include those resources in the Ridgелands that have intrinsic characteristics of value to the residents of that jurisdiction. Examples of local resource concerns are recreation areas used primarily by county residents, scenic areas that serve to enhance community identity and lands used for grazing. ABAG, in its program for areas for critical environmental concern, has identified land and water areas which it considers to be of regional significance throughout the nine county Bay Area; many of these resources are found in the Ridgелands. In the Ridgелands, an important resource from ABAG's point of view is the scenic value, particularly the highly visible front hills which act as a backdrop to the urbanized East Bay plain. EBRPD is concerned with those parkland sites which serve a regional need and have developed specific criteria indicating characteristics that potential areas should have to be considered regional. Among the Park District's interest in the Ridgелands, then, is to retain the character of existing sites and to prevent the loss or degradation of potential parkland sites through acquisition. BOR's interest in Ridgелands resources lies with the recreation opportunities this area provides. While the Ridgелands may not contain recreation resources of national importance, BOR assists other agencies to plan and provide for such facilities.

The purpose of the Ridgелands Study was to examine existing efforts to protect the open space resources of the Ridgелands and to recommend additional actions which should be taken, with major emphasis on those actions which could be taken by existing local agencies. The study provided a unique opportunity for the participating agencies to benefit from a sharing of information, ideas, and perspectives. As such, it may serve as a model for inter-jurisdictional cooperation in similar situations throughout the country.

The basic work of the study was performed by a Technical Work Group consisting of staff members from each of the participating agencies. Policy direction was provided by an Administrative Board consisting of one member of each of the three county boards of supervisors and one member of the Board of Directors of the East Bay Regional Park District. A Citizens Advisory Committee was established with 5 members from each participating county. Chosen to represent a wide variety of viewpoints, they helped provide information and policy direction to the study.

The boundaries of the Ridgелands Study Area in each county were determined by the staff members of the Technical Work Group from each county and generally include only undeveloped, unincorporated areas currently designated as open space on the counties' adopted general plans. In some instances, however, the boundaries include incorporated and/or developed areas. The study area boundaries are not meant to be precise, fixed boundaries. They

are only generalized boundaries which may need further delineation and refinement by each county.

## *Summary of Findings and Recommendations*

The findings and recommendations of the Ridgелands Study are presented throughout Chapter IV of this report. They are summarized briefly, however, in the following paragraphs:

If the open space resources of the Ridgелands area are to be adequately protected by existing local agencies, they will have to employ a wide variety of methods. Although most of these methods are already being used, some of them are not being used as effectively as they could be.

Public acquisition is an important tool for protecting open space in the Ridgелands, particularly for areas needed for public recreation. The East Bay Regional Park District and the Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation Department should continue to acquire open space lands in the Ridgелands in accordance with their adopted plans, with highest priority to acquiring lands with recreational potential located closest to the urban areas.

The amount of additional land these two agencies are likely to be able to acquire within the Ridgелands in the short-term future, however, is relatively small compared to the total amount of land currently in private ownership. The prospects for State and/or Federal acquisitions or grants for acquisitions on vast acreages in the area also seem slight. Consequently, efforts to preserve open space in the Ridgелands must recognize that the majority of the area is likely to remain in private ownership.

The most appropriate open space use for these private lands is grazing. Ranching in much of the Diablo Range, however, is generally a difficult and uncertain enterprise at best. The plans, policies, and programs of local governments must therefore be sensitive to the problems of ranchers and must attempt to help minimize those problems whenever possible.

Protection of ranching in the Ridgелands will require adoption of strict land use regulations by the counties, as well as effective urban development policies to prevent the cities from extending urban development into the area. It will also require the granting of property tax relief to grazing lands, and it will require that public park acquisition programs be sensitive to their potential adverse impacts on adjacent privately owned lands being used for grazing.

If they are willing to use them, local governments already have at their disposal the basic tools necessary to preserve the open space resources of the Ridgелands. If they do not use these tools effectively and open space lands in the Ridgелands continue to be destroyed or degraded, it will only create further pressure and justification for the State and/or Federal governments to step in and take action.



## *Chapter Two*

## *Existing Conditions*







## *Chapter Two-Existing Conditions*

### *Topography*

The Ridgелands encompass most of the northern Diablo Range and its western foothills; they include 167,000 acres in Contra Costa County, 264,000 acres in Alameda County and 415,000 acres in Santa Clara County, some 846,000 acres in all.

Interstate 580 constitutes a major dividing line within the study area. North of this line, development adjacent to the study area is much more complex and has a greater effect on the study area. South of this line roads are few and the study area becomes more rugged and more remote.

The Ridgелands portion of the Diablo Range consists of a series of more or less parallel ridges, running in a northwest-southeast direction. The main exception is Mount Diablo, an intrusive mass of erosion resistant rock which has resulted in a striking and unique landform. The Ridgелands are drained in the north by small to moderate-sized creeks, flowing generally through narrow canyons. The central and southern portions of the study area drain into two watersheds, Alameda Creek and Coyote Creek, both of which are important water resources for the region. In certain areas the canyons broaden out into alluvial valleys, which have some agricultural importance. Elevations range between 1000 and 2000 feet in the northern portion (except for Mount Diablo itself at 3849 feet), and 500 to over 4000 feet in the southern portion of the study area. Significant portions of the latter are above 2500 feet, rugged and somewhat inhospitable. The slopes of the Ridgелands are predominantly steep, usually from 25 to 50 percent; in some areas they range up to 75 percent.

### *Vegetation*

The grasses of the Ridgелands are dominated by a mixture of annual species, mostly of European origin, and perennials which for the most part are native species. A variety of wildflowers occurs with the grasses and presents a succession of colorful blooms in the spring. Open woodland areas, dominated by blue oak, buckeye and digger pine, occur also within the grassland community. In the canyons and ravines a more forest-like association develops, consisting of bay, bigleaf maple, several species of oak, and madrone. Common trees along watercourses are alders, willows, cottonwoods and sycamore.

In the hills east of Oakland is a small redwood forest area, and scattered through the higher elevations are stands of coulter and ponderosa pine.

Knobcone pine occurs in several small groves on Mount Diablo and near Moraga. Monterey pine and blue gum eucalyptus are important introduced trees in the hills adjacent to Oakland and Berkeley and at a few other localities in the study area. Extensive areas of chaparral are found in the rockier sites in the southeastern part of Santa Clara County. This community of shrubs forms large areas of almost impenetrable vegetation, which is periodically swept by massive fires. Predominant shrub species here include chamise, black sage, manzanita, toyon, and ceanothus. There are no commercially important forest areas within the study area, although Christmas tree production and firewood production are uses of forest products. Several rare and endangered species of plants are known to occur within the study area, and their localities have been identified in county plans and by the California Native Plant Society.

## *Climate*

The climate of the Ridglands is Mediterranean, with cool, moist winters (generally the moist period extends from November through April) and warm, dry summers. Rainfall is low to moderate; most of the study area receives between 20 to 40 inches per year. The mean annual temperature is 55 to 65 degrees F. and the frost-free season is 200 to 300 days.

## *Wildlife*

The extensive open space areas of the Ridglands provide relatively rich and undisturbed habitat for a wide variety of animal species. Much of the study area contains habitat for game species, notably deer, pigeon and quail. Raccoons, foxes, opossums, coyotes, skunks and bobcats are the more common large mammals. Raptorial birds are also numerous, feeding upon the large population of rabbits and rodents. Many songbirds, reptile and amphibian species find suitable habitat here. As with the plants, rare or endangered species of animals are known to occur within the study area. The chief threat to wildlife is destruction of their habitat.

## *Historical and Educational Resources*

Numerous archaeological sites have been identified within the study area, and some of these have been the subject of scientific research. Public access to these sites is not encouraged because of the threat of vandalism and other irreparable damage. Many sites of historical interest relating to our own culture are also known and some have been preserved through public acquisition. A number of sites have also been identified as areas of particular scientific or educational interest by the California Natural Areas Coordinating Council's Inventory of California Natural Areas. Many of these sites have been and continue to be utilized by the University of



California and other local colleges for research and educational purposes. Two major property holdings of the University within the study area include the Russell Tree Farm, near Orinda in Contra Costa County and the 3500-acre Lick Observatory property on Mount Hamilton in Santa Clara County.

## *Geology and Soils*

The study area consists primarily of marine and non-marine sedimentary rocks, chiefly shale, sandstone, conglomerate, graywacke and chert, with occasional intrusions of metamorphic (e.g., serpentine) and igneous (e.g., basalt) rocks. Soils derived from these rocks vary from fine clays to deep sands. Clays and clay loams are the predominant soil types. Valley bottoms consist generally of alluvium eroded from the nearby hills. Loams and sandy loams occur in these valley bottoms and provide the best agricultural conditions; however, only about two to three percent of the study area contains these soils. Most of the soils in the Ridgeland are in Class VI, VII and VIII. Soils in these classes are best suited for permanent vegetation and uses such as livestock grazing, wildlife habitat, recreation (low intensity) and water storage.

## *Water Resources*

Alameda and Coyote Creeks are the largest streams within the study area; their combined watersheds occupy over half the acreage involved. Other major streams include Pacheco Creek in southern Santa Clara County, Corral Hollow, San Leandro and San Lorenzo Creeks in Alameda County, and San Pablo, Alhambra, Walnut, Marsh and Kellogg Creeks in Contra Costa County. Most of these streams are utilized for agriculture, groundwater recharge or domestic purposes. Major reservoirs are located on some of them. These include Briones and San Pablo Reservoirs in Contra Costa County; Upper San Leandro, San Antonio and Del Valle Reservoirs and Lake Chabot in Alameda County; and Calaveras, Anderson and Coyote Reservoirs in Santa Clara County. In addition, there are a number of smaller flood control or storage reservoirs. The natural inflows of the major reservoirs are augmented by imported water from the Sierra Nevada Range.

The general availability of water in the study area is quite restricted, and this greatly limits the potential for intensive agricultural use and for residential development.

## *Land Use*

The Ridgeland is made up of a variety of resources determined by the intrinsic characteristics of the land; these constitute the open space values of the area (see Existing Land Use Map). The lands and resources

are used by man for many purposes, most are compatible with open space values, some are not; the following are the major land uses in the Ridgeland.

### Grazing and Agriculture

Grazing is by far the predominant land use within the study area (over 90 percent). Most of the land is steeply sloping with thin soils which can support only a low or moderate level of grazing. In some valleys, deeper soils and greater availability of water have allowed for the development of more intensive agriculture, such as orcharding or row crops. Christmas tree farms are also being established. Generally, the poor soils and limited availability of water have greatly restricted agricultural development in the study area.

### Mining

The predominant industrial use within the study area is mining. A number of quarries are currently operating at sites in the study area, providing crushed rock, sand and gravel for the construction industry. These sites total as much as 3000 acres; they are generally considered compatible with agricultural use, and often can be reclaimed for other long-term uses. In a few quarry operations, clay shale deposits are extracted for ceramics.

### Residential Development

Some land within the study area has been developed for residential use, mostly on a rural or semi-rural scale. More intensive residential uses are found along the edges of the study area. Urban services are generally unavailable except for those areas immediately adjacent to developed areas. There are presently a number of approved residential development proposals along the fringes of the Ridgeland and in specific locations within. Moreover, there are other proposals for which approval is pending. Most of these proposals are for single-family subdivisions ranging in size from 20 to 200 units. Blackhawk Ranch, located on the lower slopes of Mount Diablo in Contra Costa County, is the largest with 3733 dwelling units. As a condition for approval, the developer has agreed to dedicate over 2000 acres of his land to the State to expand Mount Diablo State Park. To the south in Alameda County, recent subdivision proposals include Nipper Ranch, Jensen Ranch and Columbia Associates Properties on the fringe of the Ridgeland. Development in Hayward, Union City and Fremont also has extended into the Ridgeland (see Jurisdictional Boundary Map).

Existing residential development in the Diablo Range of Santa Clara County has occurred primarily in the foothills above the Cities of San Jose and



Morgan Hill. The development in the foothills above San Jose is being permitted by the county on parcels generally ranging from two and one half to 10 acres and tends to be quite visible from the Santa Clara Valley due to the open character of the grassy hillsides on which it is occurring. A substantial amount of residential development has also occurred on the slopes and ridges near Anderson Reservoir where Morgan Hill has extended urban services into the hills and has permitted development on one half acre parcels. Single-family homes have already been built in this area and more building sites have been approved. A large-scale proposal to construct housing units on the slopes and ridgetops north of Anderson Dam is currently before the San Jose City Council. The proposed development lies outside San Jose's urban service area and the City Planning Commission has recommended that the proposal be rejected.

### Utilities

Large acreages within the study area are owned and managed by various utility districts and companies. Water districts such as the East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD), San Francisco Water Department and Santa Clara Valley Water District own reservoir areas and large watershed acreages surrounding them to ensure the quality of the reservoir water. In addition, the State of California owns the Del Valle State Recreation Area containing a large reservoir and surrounding watershed which is managed and operated by the East Bay Regional Park District. Several major transmission lines cross the study area; most of these are easements, but occasionally utilities such as Pacific Gas and Electric Company or Pacific Telephone Company have purchased rights-of-way for their facilities.

### Recreation

A large amount of acreage within the study area comes under the jurisdiction of various park agencies. The East Bay Regional Park District owns or leases over 37,000 acres of land within the study area. Recent acquisitions totalling almost 7000 acres are generally devoted to grazing and have not yet been opened to the public for recreation. The City of Pleasanton owns the 230-acre Walter Johnson Park on Pleasanton Ridge. The Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation Department operates approximately 14,000 acres of parklands within the study area, mostly in the western foothills of the Diablo Range. Their most recent acquisition is the large (more than 9400 acres) Grant Ranch located in Halls Valley about 10 miles east of downtown San Jose. The facility has not yet been officially opened to the public.

The State of California owns some 25,000 acres of parklands in two units within the study area, Mount Diablo State Park in Contra Costa County, and Henry W. Coe State Park in Santa Clara County. Approximately 7000 acres of public domain lands administered by the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management exist in scattered parcels around Henry W. Coe

State Park. Though publicly owned, these lands are not considered parklands.

Recreational uses which take advantage of the natural Ridgeland environment, such as hiking, horseback riding, picnicking, camping, fishing, swimming, boating, photography, nature study, and painting are perhaps best suited to the area. Recreational driving and bicycling are other common activities, but these activities are primarily confined to existing roads and do not require parks per se, although parks do complement them.

Private recreation opportunities are less extensive, but nevertheless important. Some facilities are open to the public, while others require membership in an established group. Included are stable and horseback riding facilities, an off-road vehicle park, golf courses, archery facilities, picnic grounds, and swimming facilities. Groups such as the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts also operate facilities. A large scale proposal for a guest ranch, located in the Apperson Ridge area, was approved by the Alameda County Board of Supervisors and is now being contested in the courts.

## *Ownership Patterns*

Most of the privately owned large landholdings within the study area are utilized for grazing. The largest single ownership is a 30,000-acre holding in southern Alameda and northern Santa Clara Counties. The size of the holdings is often related to accessibility, with parcels closer to the urban areas and roads having in general a greater proportion of small rural homesites. This is particularly apparent in the northwestern portion of the study area, where the remaining larger parcels are long-time family holdings and the average size of parcels is steadily decreasing.

## *Road Access*

As mentioned earlier, the study area can be divided into two sub-areas on the basis of access and general circulation. This dividing line is Interstate 580 to the east border of the study area. In the northern sub-area, numerous roads provide access such that few places are more than a mile or two from a public road. Major thoroughfares include State Highways 4 and 24, both of which are improved to freeway standards, at least in part; and Interstates 580 and 680, which cross the study area connecting the Livermore and Amador Valley areas with the cities of the East Bay. Branching off from these major routes are numerous secondary roads making more or less direct access from communities adjacent to the study area very good.

In the southern sub-area, public roads are not nearly so common. Several roads occur in the foothill areas, and one winding two-lane road crosses the heart of the study area at Mount Hamilton to the San Antonio Valley, but there are no other roads which cross the sub-area until one reaches

State Highway 152 at Pacheco Pass. The result of this inaccessibility has been the retention of large private landholdings. In the Santa Clara County portion, subdivision generally has occurred only on the western edges where road access exists. Many private service roads which provide access to ranches in the Ridgeland are also utilized for firefighting purposes. These roads, however, are generally not available for public access of any kind.

Trail access to and within the study area varies tremendously, but is confined mostly to existing units of public parks. Adjacent to Oakland and Berkeley, the long-established park chain of the East Bay Regional Park District has good trail access to and within. Recent extensions through portions of the East Bay Municipal Utility District lands have allowed for connections to some of the District's more remote parklands such as Briones and Las Trampas. Generally, however, the trail projects are still in early planning stages.

Most of the roads within the study area have been designated by the counties as scenic routes, which may place special restrictions upon development of adjacent properties. These restrictions generally affect location, number, and height of dwellings or other structures.

## *Environmental Hazards*

Certain environmental hazards occur within the study area which place constraints upon the type and intensity of development. These fall roughly into three categories--fire, seismic activity and unstable slopes.

### Fire

Because the natural vegetation and dry-farm areas within the study area are extremely flammable during the late summer and early fall, fire is a serious hazard in and adjacent to developed areas. Fire hazard varies from day to day, and is influenced by humidity, slope, wind speed and direction, accessibility to human activities (most fires in the study area are man-caused), and accessibility of firefighting equipment. In the southern portion of the study area, the extensive stands of chaparral create the highest fire potential. Fire is an essential element of the chaparral eco-system. However, long-term fire prevention in chaparral areas tends to increase fire hazard levels. This danger lessens somewhat nearer to San Francisco Bay where humidity tends to be higher and temperatures lower. However, the entire study area is subject to days of extreme fire hazard. The rugged terrain and limited accessibility create problems for protecting some developed areas from fire hazards. This past year, due to an unusually low amount of winter rainfall, the fire danger was extremely high. Henry W. Coe State Park, in the southern portion of the study area, was, in fact, closed for a period of time last summer.



### Seismic Activities

Numerous earthquake faults which are considered active occur in the study area. The two most important of these are the Hayward Fault, which lies along the western boundary of the study area, and the Calaveras Fault, which extends from the Hayward Fault near Anderson Reservoir in a northerly direction through Calaveras Reservoir and up the San Ramon Valley. Many other shorter faults are known throughout the study area.

### Unstable Slopes

The highly fractured nature of the parent materials, and the steepness of slopes have led to a general condition of slope instability within much of the study area. Certain geologic formations are notorious for landsliding and other slope problems. Most of the lands within the study area are moderately to steeply sloping and the landslide hazard, either from generally weak bedrock or from seismic activity, is of major concern.

## Chapter Three

## Issues







# *Chapter Three-Issues*

## *Introduction*

This chapter of the study report deals with major problems or issue areas which impact, either directly or indirectly, the open space resource values of the Ridgeland. Initially, topical issues were identified by members of the Technical Work Group. Subsequently, a series of meetings were held to seek input from the Citizens Advisory Committee members on issues. Elaboration and perspectives on these issues were accomplished by means of a questionnaire, which was prepared and used to interview key individuals and groups concerned about the future of the Ridgeland. Those interviewed included environmentalists, ranchers and landowners, lawyers, tax specialists, engineers, developers, and professional resource managers such as soil scientists, farm advisors, fire experts, and park managers.

## *Land Use Issues*

### Incompatible Uses

Existing land uses in the Ridgeland were enumerated in the previous chapter. They include grazing, mining, watershed protection, park and recreation areas, some agricultural areas and scattered residential development. Grazing is, by far, the most common land use (more than 90 percent). Urban development is incompatible with grazing, the magnitude of that incompatibility being in direct proportion to the intensity and proximity of the development. Any large scale increases in urban development will have sizeable impacts on lands used for grazing, most of which are already only marginally profitable. Residential development, even at densities as low as one residence per 20 acres, poses problems. An idea of the nature of incompatible uses can be gained from consideration of grazing and residential development. Problems for grazing associated with people and residential development include trespassing, broken and cut fences, vandalism, running of stock, fire, intrusion by domestic dogs, trail bikes and off-road vehicles, illegal use of firearms and litter.

Trespassing can result in compounding problems such as broken and cut fences. Fences require time and money to repair and before a broken

fence or an open gate is discovered by a rancher, livestock may escape. In some cases improvements are vandalized or destroyed by trespassers. "No Trespassing" signs are frequently removed or defaced. Livestock may be harassed or frightened into running, with danger of injury. Fire can result from trespassing and unauthorized camping during the dry months of the year. Dry grass and brush provide fuel for fires. In steep-sided canyons with proper wind conditions, fires can spread very quickly. The lack of water at many locations and the rugged terrain, in general, make controlling fires difficult.

Domestic dogs have been seen in packs at a number of locations in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, at the fringe of the Ridgeland areas near residential development, in the Ridgeland interior and in major parks. Domestic dogs have attacked and killed livestock, deer and other wildlife.

Trail bikes and off-road vehicles disturb soil, damage vegetative ground cover, frighten livestock and wildlife, and if not properly equipped and maintained they can cause fires.

The net effect of development next to property used for grazing is to limit the use of that portion of a rancher's land abutting the development. Frequently, the only alternative available to the rancher is to use his own land as a buffer. This results in increased costs to the rancher since he still pays taxes on the affected unuseable portion of his property.

### Land Value

In remote areas of the Ridgeland areas used extensively for grazing, fair market value approximates the value of property for grazing use. The services needed by development are in general non-existent. The range of uses to which the property could be put is also limited by access, topography and other factors, and any speculation in land is generally long-term in nature. At the fringe of the Ridgeland areas, however, and in pockets of residential development in the interior, fair market value includes an urban value component, the value in excess of the present income producing value of the property. The urban value component is attributable to a number of factors. Included are proximity to existing development, access, the availability of water and sewer service or suitability for on-site sewage disposal, and attractive amenities for residential sites, e.g., trees, drainageways and good views. Most of these factors are predominant at the fringe of the Ridgeland areas, but are also present at other locations. The urban value component raises market value above the value of the property in open space use and can therefore adversely affect open space uses, particularly by increasing property taxes.

Landowners may therefore attempt to make substantially more money from subdivision and sale of lots than from ranching or leasing the property to a rancher for grazing. Land thus becomes an investment commodity rather than a resource to be managed and protected. Urban development

and the other factors which result in an urban value increment for rural properties and an increase in the demand for rural properties provide an economic incentive for subdivision and/or development and a disincentive for grazing use.

Additional factors contributing to fair market value are public regulations, previous public decisions and individual expectations of future use. Zoning which allows subdivision with relatively small lots can increase fair market value and, in turn, assessed value, which is based on the highest and best use. Expectations are affected by previous decisions, rezonings, and general plan amendments in response to development proposals. Expectations also relate to the possibility that access, utilities and other services may be provided or improved in the future.

### Subdivision

Subdivision in the Ridgeland results in a decrease in average parcel size, fragmentation of ownership patterns, and usually an increase in the number of residential structures. For example, as average parcel size decreases, it becomes progressively more difficult to engage in grazing and the total area devoted to grazing can be expected to decline. Subdivision also has indirect effects which relate to residential use, land use conflicts and increases in residential population. Included are effects which have already been described, such as increased property values, but also the need for improved utility and other "urban" services, as well as conflicts with the physical resources embodied in the Ridgeland. Subdivision of properties for residential use where residences do not now exist in the Ridgeland is of special significance since development would be introduced into new areas and "snowballing" could take place.

The subdivision of land creates a demand for formalized water and/or sewer service. Although this might be dismissed as a remote possibility, given present land use and environmental regulations, Local Agency Formation Commissions' (LAFCO) spheres of influence (see Chapter IV, Urban Development Policy) and other factors, such extension cannot be precluded. Groundwater quality in a rural residential area could be degraded due to septic pollution and from an extension of water service required for public health reasons.

Subdivision also creates a need for improving other services such as fire protection. Rural fire districts not associated with urban districts may be staffed by volunteers. A moderate numerical increase in the number of residential structures may substantially increase fire service requirements. In some instances, additional equipment and/or full-time staff may be needed. The water supply for firefighting in rural areas is often limited. Residential structures using groundwater for domestic purposes may lower the water table in areas dependent upon groundwater. Several years of substantially less than average rainfall may intensify the problem and



create a need to develop new water supplies or water storage facilities.

The interaction between the subdivision of land in the Ridgелands and flood control in the flood plain is an ongoing problem. The soil types in the Ridgелands generally have low to moderate water storage capacities, moderate to high shrink-swell potential and moderate to high landslide hazards. The flood plain soil types are dominantly poorly drained clay types. Over the years, there have been serious floods covering large areas in central Contra Costa County and parts of Alameda County. Continued subdivision in the Ridgелands, particularly the type requiring massive land reshaping, will increase the flood hazard to the flood plain.

A similar situation exists with respect to roads. Residential development and even parks generate traffic which contributes to congestion of narrow rural roads. If the accident rate increases, or if people are injured, a need and justification for widening, straightening or otherwise improving an existing road and/or constructing an entirely new road is created. Improved roads and access to Ridgелands properties would serve as a stimulus to additional growth.

The approval of major and minor subdivisions on the grounds that existing roads will be used for access and that wells and septic tank systems will be used for water supply and sewage disposal does not ensure that the same situation will continue to exist in the future. Overall coordination between the subdivision of property and the provision of services is clearly needed.

#### Minimum Lot Size

The minimum lot sizes prescribed by general plans and zoning ordinances are factors which, in part, determine the intensity and type of development and indirectly affect property values. The determination of minimum lot sizes which could be applied in the Ridgелands depends upon the land use objectives which are sought and the location of the land.

If open space land uses such as grazing are to be preserved and residential land use confined to existing urban areas, large minimum lot sizes such as 100 acres would be most appropriate. In general, those portions of the Ridgелands zoned 20 acres or less function to accommodate subdivision for residential use, as compared to zoning with a minimum lot size of 100 acres, which does not.

Although the argument might be made that 20-acre residential lots may retain open space characteristics, this is a highly questionable argument. A typical 20-acre parcel might include a house, access road or driveway, well, septic tank system with leaching field and a corral or other enclosure for stock or domestic animals. Small sheds or stables might be built and electrical and telephone services might be extended. Thus, a 20-acre parcel could be substantially developed and if this occurs in

conjunction with several other parcels, open space values are considerably diminished.

### Mineral Extraction

Historically, mining has been conducted in the Ridgeland areas at a number of locations. Some mineral resources are presently mined in the Ridgeland areas and other extractable mineral resources are found in the Ridgeland areas. The major issues relating to mining and quarrying are: 1) the prevention of premature development of incompatible uses which might interfere with the recovery of mineral resources; 2) the regulation and reclamation of mines and quarries to reduce environmental impacts and to enable other use to be made of property after mining or quarrying has ceased; and 3) impacts from the extraction of minerals on prominent ridgelines.

The California Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 attempts to deal with these issues. Under the Act, the State Geologist will identify mineral resources of known and potential significance. Every local agency with responsibility for approving a surface mining operation is required to establish mineral resource management policies to be incorporated in its general plan. These policies must: 1) recognize mineral information developed by the State Geologist; 2) address the management of land use for areas of statewide and regional significance; and 3) emphasize conservation and development of identified mineral deposits. The Act also requires the formulation and approval of reclamation plans for most surface mining operations.

It must be recognized that the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 does not address nor can it be expected to solve all problems of surface mining. Moreover, it may be several years before the Act becomes fully operational. Other problems which need to be addressed at the local level include mineral resources which may be of local significance, outstanding surface mining permits which are exempt from the Act, and the rehabilitation of old mines and quarries which are inactive. Old quarries may pose hazards due to steep, unstable rock faces. Erosion may be increased and the leaching of exposed bedrock may present water quality problems. Aesthetic values may also be affected in many instances, especially along prominent ridgelines and mining may conflict with other uses such as outdoor recreation.

### Utilities

Two topics related to utilities are of concern in the Ridgeland areas. First is the extension of sewer and water service needed for development, and second is the extent and location of electrical utility and communication lines and facilities.

## Sewer and Water Service

In the past, cities and special districts have been willing to expand service areas to accommodate growth in new areas. Due to increasing construction costs and environmental and planning-related constraints and regulations, the ability to extend services has become more restricted. For example, the provision of additional sewer connections may be limited by inadequate treatment plant capacity.

Despite the difficulties involved with extending services, some areas in the Ridgелands presently have water and/or sewer service and their future extension, particularly at the fringe, is not precluded. Water and sewer service make possible development of much greater intensity than would otherwise be possible. Cities, in particular, have been willing, in some instances, to extend water and sewer service into new areas at the fringe of the Ridgелands. Such extension can result from new subdivision and development proposals or be in response to existing development. If such extensions are made, an impetus for additional development is provided, especially if facilities are designed with excess capacity. Pressure can also result for changes in the general plan and/or zoning ordinance which would permit additional or higher density development. The tax payments required for financing of new facilities are sometimes used as justification of additional development or general plan amendments and rezonings. Any expansion or extension of utilities in the Ridgелands therefore requires careful analysis for potential growth-inducing effects.

From an economic viewpoint, the cost and difficulty in servicing hill areas as compared to flat lands support keeping them in open space. Most of the Ridgелands' interior is remote from existing urban services. Few places in the Ridgелands have public water or sewer services at the present time. The cost of other services such as schools, police, and fire may also be high. Cost-benefit studies conducted by Bay Area localities have found that residential subdivisions in foothill areas will generally result in both initial one-time government outlays and continuing net revenue losses. This largely occurs because costs involved in creating and maintaining urban services in these areas are typically higher than the tax revenues produced by such development.

## Communication and Energy Transmission Facilities

Towers for radio, television and telephone transmission require high locations on ridge or hill tops. Such locations are highly visible and are often times prime park and recreation sites. In fact, transmission facilities are already located in existing parks in the Ridgелands such as Mount Diablo State Park. Shared use of tower locations and environmentally sensitive design can reduce but not eliminate the impact on scenic resources.



The location and design of utility lines (e.g., power transmission lines and pipelines) similarly require careful consideration of Ridgeland's resources. As is the case for communications facilities, access roads are required alongside for periodic patrols and fences may also be required in some instances. Moreover, substantial grading and removal of vegetation may also be needed. Areas of unique beauty are subject to significant loss of scenic value with the installation of lines and/or towers. The electrical transmission lines crossing Briones Regional Park in Contra Costa County, which were constructed over public objection, provide an excellent example of the scenic impacts which can occur. At the present time, local jurisdictions exert little control over the siting of electrical transmission lines and pipelines (e.g., petroleum and natural gas).

### Recreation

The Ridgeland's represent a valuable and significant recreational resource for Bay Area residents. An issue involving recreation activities is their potential incompatibility with some natural resources and private land uses such as grazing.

Where recreation areas attract people to the vicinity of private grazing land, trespassing problems can result. People may be confused about park boundaries or may trespass on private lands whether posted or not. Broken or cut fences may result, livestock may escape, off-road vehicles may be used illegally and fires may be started. Recreation and grazing can be compatible, however, if the recreation use is limited to low intensity activities such as hiking, horseback riding, and picnicking. This compatibility is evidenced by the fact that significant portions of the public parklands administered by the East Bay Regional Park District are leased for grazing purposes with no apparent conflict. Also, grazing occurs on some of the lands opened by the East Bay Municipal Utility District for public recreation.

The management of public lands may also conflict with the management of private lands. As an example, private efforts to control ground squirrels may be undermined by wildlife preservation policies on adjacent public lands and vice versa. Also, predator control programs sponsored by the State and local governments can be inconsistent with a ground squirrel program as well as a wildlife preservation policy. There is a clear need to coordinate all of these activities and to develop programs which will not cancel the respective efforts of the different interest groups involved.

The potential impacts on Ridgeland's resources from parks are, in general, proportional to the number of people attracted and the type, scope, and location of facilities. Trails which are located along park boundaries, for example, may increase impacts on adjoining privately owned properties. Trails planned by public park agencies to link major parks often must traverse private property. Some landowners may be reluctant to allow

such trails to pass through their properties.

Whereas hiking, horseback riding, picnicking and other low-intensity uses may be generally acceptable and compatible with other open space uses and Ridgeland's resources, intensive recreational uses pose more substantial problems. In particular, off-road vehicle (ORV) parks present numerous problems due to the large land area required, traffic, noise, and environmental disruption. Several thousand acres may be required for an ORV use area to be successful. Varied terrain with hills and a variety of vegetation are desired by ORV users. The use of ORV's in hilly terrain disturbs the ground surface, destroys vegetative cover and leads to rutting of the ground, soil compaction and increased erosion. Activity from ORV's disturbs wildlife and noise impacts may extend beyond an ORV use area. Access and increased traffic associated with use areas can also pose problems.

There is no assurance that a designated ORV use area would eliminate problems since it has not been clearly demonstrated that ORV areas can be adequately managed to control adverse environmental impacts and to keep impacts at an acceptable level. It has for example been suggested that a park could be divided into several areas and ORV use rotated between the defined areas, the idea being that this would provide time for individual areas to recover and regenerate. Although this might appear to provide adequate control, use of ORV's over time and over the same trails can be expected to displace topsoil and lead to erosion and rutting of hillsides, and silting of drainageways.

The environmental impacts of ORV use and costs associated with site regeneration vary from one site to another, depending on factors such as topography, vegetation, soil type, rainfall, etc. Generally, though, ORV impacts are long-term and the regeneration costs are high. Unquestionably, there is a demand for such facilities; yet, because of the potential impacts associated with them, careful thought must be given to locating ORV sites where these impacts can be minimized.

### Grazing

Areas of grazing land which the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) considers to be prime are found in the Ridgeland's. Grazing land should therefore be regarded as a resource to be protected and carefully managed.

Grazing land is subject to overgrazing. This occurs when grazing by domestic animals becomes too intensive--too many animals for a given carrying capacity of the land--or when over-population of wild animals occurs. A deterioration of soil conditions and the quality of the range forage can result. The carrying capacity of overgrazed land is itself reduced through such occurrences as invasions of inferior plant species, increased water runoff, and soil erosion. Sedimentation in reservoirs may increase and water quality drop. Undergrazing can be a serious

problem as well. Fire hazard will be greater in undergrazed grassland areas and changes of plant species may occur.

Reasons for overgrazing and overutilization of grazing lands may include high property taxes, high operating costs and unreliable rainfall such as that which we are now experiencing. Overgrazing also results when operators do not have long-term leases or interest in property. Operators may try to maximize their return on leased grazing property. Overgrazing may also result in some instances from working with poor grazing land, small acreages, and a lack of knowledge concerning grazing. Overgrazing can also be a problem in rural residential areas where owners keep horses or other livestock.

Grazing land can recover from the effects of overgrazing in many instances. Recovery, however, may take several years or longer without additional grazing, depending on rainfall, the amount of damage to soil, the extent of undesirable plant species and other factors. It may be difficult for operators to give grazing lands sufficient time to recover by ceasing grazing activity and still continue to pay property taxes. While it is recognized that there are points of conflict between grazing, wildlife management and the current property tax structure, these conflicts are most likely to be resolved through closer cooperation among landowners, grazing tenants, those who operate and manage adjacent public lands and the respective county officials who legislate property tax programs.

#### Development and the Ridgelands

Central to the foregoing discussion on land use issues is the extent and type of development that can occur in the Ridgeland without significantly harming the area's open space values and resources. Development can be done in ways that recognize environmental constraints and reduce negative resource impacts. Yet, any prospective development in the Ridgeland poses several serious questions that need to be considered in light of overall policy goals of open space preservation. These questions go beyond the physical and economic constraints that any specific project faces to include impacts on open space resources, incompatibility with other land uses, economic costs to the locality, and wider environmental concerns such as air and water quality, energy consumption, and shaping urban growth.

### *Taxation Issues*

Taxes can play a significant role in private property owner decisions that can affect land use and they have an important influence on the land market. The relationship between taxes and open space preservation is an issue to the extent that the various tax structures hinder or encourage open space preservation. Some proponents of reforms in the tax system base their arguments on the conviction that high taxes lead to land division and



sell-off, which in turn leads to more intensive use and development.

Two types of taxes serve to provide incentive for the development of land. These are the annual property tax and the so-called "death taxes"--the California State Inheritance Tax and the Federal Estate Tax. The property tax affects virtually all privately held land, while the inheritance and estate taxes have their greatest affects on individual and family holdings.

### Property Tax

The property tax, like the inheritance and estate taxes, plays a significant role in the land market. It has been described as being out-dated, inequitable, and poorly administered. At the same time it remains a primary, if not the primary, source of district and local revenues. The property tax is an annual tax on the value of real property (i.e., land and the improvements thereon). It affects not just individual and family-held real property, but virtually all private holdings and some quasi-public lands as well.

Historically, the property tax has been based on an assessment of the property at its highest and best use in the foreseeable future. The property tax represents one of the costs of open space land use. Unfortunately market value assessments may exceed the value of property in open space use for a number of reasons. Included are general plans and zoning which permit use intensification above present levels; intensification of use on surrounding properties; speculative demand for property; availability of sewer and water service, access, and a host of other factors. The property tax has thus provided a very real incentive for property owners to intensify the use of their holdings in order to achieve a higher income that could better support tax costs. As uses have intensified on some property, the market value--and in turn taxes--on surrounding properties have risen anew, perpetuating the cycle.

Taxes based on the speculative market value of land at its highest and best potential use can have an exceptionally strong impact. Such taxation ignores the present income generated on property and the ability of the owners to pay. In some Ridgeland cases, income derived from property is lower than the taxes based on a market value tax assessment.

Although the profitability of some open space uses such as grazing varies considerably from year to year depending on weather conditions, feed costs, the market for livestock, etc., property taxes do not vary accordingly. Thus, a rancher may be able to earn a profit in most years, some years, or rarely, depending on the size and suitability for grazing on property holdings and arrangements to lease other properties for grazing use, the market for cattle and costs of operation.

Historically, both high and low income agricultural and open space lands

have been subject to the pressures of taxes based on speculative value on the urban rural fringes of metropolitan areas. The workings of the property tax system created an economic force--though, of course, not the only one--for unplanned, premature and unnecessary urban expansion. Much agricultural and open space land has been needlessly lost because high taxes forced landowners to sell their lands to speculators and developers or to become such themselves. One answer to the tax dilemma is to establish a tax structure which is equitable, which exerts the proper pressure for utilization of property and which meets the costs of necessary services. The Williamson Act and open space easements, which are discussed in Chapter IV, represent attempts to deal with property tax problems.

### State Inheritance Tax/Federal Estate Tax

The State Inheritance Tax (SIT) and the Federal Estate Tax (FET) are commonly confused with each other--many people simply refer to "inheritance tax" when meaning both taxes. But the two taxes do differ. The FET is a transfer tax imposed on the value of a decedent's entire estate minus certain deductions. The SIT is a tax based on the value of each transferred share of a decedent's estate and the relationship of each beneficiary to the decedent. Both tax systems use graduated tax rate schedules, but the SIT system has differing rate schedules and differing standard deductions for different classes of beneficiaries. The closer the relationship between the decedent and the beneficiary the lower the tax on that beneficiary's portion of the estate. Some credit against the Federal Estate Tax bill is allowed for paid State Inheritance Taxes.

During this study, two specific problem areas came up in regard to the FET and SIT. The first involves the adequacy of standard deductions. A main purpose behind standard deductions is to guarantee that some minimum amount of an estate is left free and clear to a decedent's heirs. Prior to the 1976 Federal Tax Reform the minimum for the FET was the \$60,000 standard deduction, set in 1942. The standard deduction under the SIT system depends on the relationship between the decedent and the beneficiary. The decedent's spouse is entitled to a \$60,000 deduction, minor children to a \$12,000 deduction, other children \$5000, and so forth down to \$300 for unrelated persons. According to many landowners, given the value today of even very moderately sized ranches, these deductions do little to guard family-run agricultural operations from massive one-time tax bills. Such family operations often do not have sufficient assets other than the land and improvements thereon to cover these taxes.

The second difficulty involves valuation of agricultural and open space land for estate and inheritance tax purposes. On land which is not enforceably restricted (Williamson Act contract), both the State and Federal governments had assessed land based on its fair market value, i.e., its potentially highest and best use. This meant that land with any development potential for the future was taxed beyond its income

producing value as agricultural or open space land. In areas adjacent or convenient to existing urban development, this sometimes caused the enormous lump sum tax bills most likely to force estate holders into selling land. It was in these same areas that development speculators were most desirous of purchasing land. Of course, the decedent had the option to enforceably restrict his land and in doing so, he may well have been following a pro-development course of action already.

According to State law, the executor of an estate can have the State Inheritance Tax appraiser (now called a "referee") assess land which is enforceably restricted by the same use-value method used for property tax purposes. Or, if there are at least five sales of comparable land (i.e., similar land, similarly restricted, with the sales being near in time and place), then the referee would make his assessment using these comparables. (This study has found that not all Williamson Act contract holders and not all inheritance tax referees are familiar with this provision.)

In most cases, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), in arriving at the value of an estate for estate tax purposes, had simply used the State referee's assessments in their own computations. However, the IRS could not use an assessment done as above for enforceably restricted land, since, by law, they were required to determine the fair market value of all property. Under the 1976 Tax Reform, the IRS will assess property at its current use value.

The inheritance and estate tax situation created some side-effects in the Ridgелands which directly bear on open space preservation. For example, the threat of eventual large estate and inheritance taxes works to keep landowners who plan ahead from placing their land under the Williamson Act. Since the great bulk of the FET was arrived at without consideration of the Williamson Act restrictions, an estate that would have been forced to sell off land would have been better off selling unrestricted land because of the higher price it would have brought.

It was partly an awareness of the eventual need to sell off land in order to pay estate and inheritance taxes that led Ridgелands landowners to persuade Santa Clara County to create a 20-acre minimum parcel size in its 20- to 160-acre slope-density zoning in its remote Ridgелands. Originally, the zoning was to have been a straight 160-acre minimum parcel size, but, it was argued, an estate would have to sell at least 160 acres of land, more than would have been necessary in most cases, to pay the taxes. If the 1976 Federal Tax Reform had occurred earlier, a more protective straight 160-acre minimum lot size might have been acceptable to the landowners.

The Estate and Gift Tax provisions of the Tax Reform Act of 1976 directly affected the impact of the FET on open space preservation in the following instances. One provision drops the standard deduction and replaces it with an effectively larger tax credit which will rise to \$47,000 by 1981. This credit is equivalent to an exemption for the first \$175,000 of a



taxable estate. A second provision raises the marital deduction to a minimum of \$250,000. The third and most interesting estate tax provision establishes a system to value farms and closely held business property at "current use" value if the property is kept in the family and remains in a qualified use.

Additional estate taxes become due if these conditions change within 15 years after the decedent's death. Also, the decrease in value from the market value of the property to its current use value cannot exceed \$500,000. Since the FET has the largest potential tax effect, the provisions of the Tax Reform Act of 1976 will likely meet many of the concerns for Ridgeland's open space preservation.



## *Chapter Four*

## *Open Space Preservation Efforts*







## *Chapter Four - Open Space Preservation Efforts*

The previous chapter identifies and discusses problem areas and major issues currently impacting the open space resource values of the Ridgeland. In this chapter, issues are discussed in terms of the planning tools, policies and implementation techniques which are available to and which are now being used by the three counties and the park district to preserve and protect these values. Throughout the study, it was recognized that much has already been done by the above jurisdictions to maintain the open space character of the Ridgeland. Despite these efforts, it was judged that further action is necessary if the Ridgeland is to be adequately protected. The recommendations are aimed at encouraging more effective use of available tools and techniques rather than introducing exotic and largely untried ones. The goal is to have recommendations which can be readily implemented.

### *Planning and Special Studies*

Land use plans and planning studies can help protect open space by identifying areas and resources which should be protected and by setting policy direction toward providing that protection. An adopted local plan embodies the official policy of that agency based on goals for social, economic and environmental concerns. It is not an implementation technique, but a guideline for local actions that carry out the policies contained within it. Implementation of those policies depends on the extent jurisdictions use these plans in the decision-making process.

All cities and counties in California are required by State law to adopt general plans, including elements dealing with such specific concerns as land use, circulation, housing, open space, conservation, etc. Until recently, however, general plans were often ignored or were amended so easily and frequently as to make them meaningless. Within the last several years, the State legislature has adopted new laws which were intended to make general plans more meaningful. In particular, one law requires that a city or county's zoning must conform with the city or county's adopted open space plan. It further provides that citizens may bring lawsuits to prevent development where zoning is not consistent with the open space plan.

As part of the change in general plan requirements, the State legislature has been increasing the number of mandatory elements which must be included in these plans. Several of these general plan elements are either directly or indirectly related to the protection of environmental resources and the preservation of open space. These include the open space element, the conservation element, the scenic highways element, the seismic safety element and the safety element (which may serve to identify hazardous areas that would be unsafe and costly to develop).

While these new elements have caused some local governments to consider open space issues they might otherwise have ignored, the proliferation of new general plan elements within a relatively short period of time has made it difficult for some jurisdictions to keep all of their general plan elements up to date. As a consequence, it is not uncommon to find general plans with inconsistent or even contradictory policies or proposals. Elements of some general plans, for example, may still show proposals for major urban facilities or infrastructure to be extended into areas shown elsewhere in the general plan as "open space" areas. The term may not be defined in some general plans and its definition may vary among others.

Additionally, some portions of general plans are superficial due to inadequate data. The amount of data concerning the environmental resources of the Ridgeland areas varies considerably from county to county. In order for these resources to be adequately protected, it is necessary that more detailed information be obtained possibly in conjunction with the preparation of the mandatory elements of the general plan, such as the conservation element. An open space designation on a general plan is not enough to ensure preservation of resources; the plan must be backed by implementation strategies directed at preservation and by decisions that are consistent with the policies.

Certain specific problems affecting the open space resources of the area are also in need of further planning studies to prevent or minimize environmental damage. One such study would address the siting of power transmission lines and radio transmitting facilities which can have significant adverse impacts on the natural scenic beauty of the Ridgeland areas. Another concerns the impacts of overgrazing which can become especially severe during dry years.

The remaining sections of this chapter deal with other implementation strategies to carry out the general plan open space policies of local agencies. To the extent that a regional or State agency depends on local agencies to implement policies directed toward preserving resources, the following strategies must also be recognized as a means toward achieving regional and State preservation objectives for Ridgeland areas' resources.

### Alameda County

A policy of the Alameda County General Plan is confinement of urbanization to existing centers and areas immediately adjacent; new development shall occur as an orderly expansion of existing urban areas until reaching limits designated on the plan. Sufficient land is in the plan to accommodate residential, commercial and industrial needs through 1990; beyond these limits (which includes most of the Alameda County Ridgeland Study Area) land is preserved for open space uses, such as agriculture, park and recreation, watershed, wildlife habitat, and scenic resources.



Over 90 percent of the Alameda County Ridgeland areas are designated for agriculture, major park or other open space use. Part of the Vallecitos Valley and the adjoining foothills south of Pleasanton, hill lands centered around Walpert Ridge near Hayward and Union City, Sunol and the bases of nearby ridges, and the hill lands above Castro Valley are notable exceptions to agriculture, park and open space designations. Urban development is being proposed or is already occurring in some of these areas.

Major amendments in recent years to Alameda County's General Plan have increased the amount of land in the Ridgeland areas designated as open space. The first of these was the Pleasanton-Dublin Hill Area Amendment. This amendment changed the designation of Pleasanton and Sunol Ridges from residential to agriculture or major parks. Limited residential designation was retained at the foot of the ridges and in Kilcare Canyon. The second major amendment to the general plan affecting land in the study area was the Castro Valley Plan Amendment. This amendment set limits to urbanization around Castro Valley. Outlying areas were changed from suburban residential to uncultivated agriculture. Residential designations were retained in the Upper Center Street area, Greenridge area, Jensen Road-Sunnyslope area, and Palomares Canyon. Alameda County is currently considering a comprehensive plan revision in the Livermore-Amador Valley which may affect ridge-lands around Pleasanton.

The Open Space Element, of the Alameda County General Plan, adopted in 1973, shows most of the study area as open space, and urban fringe land as potentially developable. Four primary open space categories are designated in the element: agricultural land, both cultivated and uncultivated, preserve land including watersheds and wildlife refuges and residential-canyon open space and connecting open space corridors. Policies of the Open Space Element supplement and supercede those of the general plan relating to open space. Other elements of the plan which establish policy applicable to the Ridgeland areas include the Scenic Route Element, the Conservation Element, the Seismic Safety Element and the Safety Element.

Parts of the study area in Alameda County fall within the city limits of Fremont, Union City, Hayward and Pleasanton. For each of these areas, city general plan designations apply. Recent study of the hill areas has increased awareness of environmental constraints. Although older plans allowed low density residential development for the area, cities are presently undecided about future development plans. Prospective urban development in the Ridgeland areas planned by the cities poses serious questions that go beyond physical and economic constraints that any specific project faces. Planned urbanization includes impacts on open space resources, incompatibility with agriculture, economic costs to the locality, energy consumption and the shaping of urban growth.

Fremont has designated its hill areas as open space and recreation lands. The open space category, however, also includes lands for future development. Approximately 3000-5000 dwelling units are projected for the hills. These units would be accommodated on large lots or clustered in planned

developments to avoid environmentally sensitive areas.

Union City has shown its hill lands as agricultural on its combined general plan and zoning maps, but has no definite plans for the area. Of the 5000 acres of hill area within the City's boundaries, most of which fall within the Ridgeland Study Area, the general plan specifies that 3000 acres are potentially developable. The plan sets a maximum density of two units per acre for a total of 6000 dwelling units.

Hayward has no official policy on the future of its hill areas in the Ridgeland Study Area. Policy actions based on the City's hill area study of 1971 have yet to be developed and the City is holding off on general plan or open space revisions. Unofficial City policy can be described as favoring suburban development on Walpert Ridge and reserving that section of the City's hill area east of Walpert Ridge as open space. Most of Pleasanton included in the study area has been designated as open space and parkland. Some pockets of low density suburban development are planned.

#### Contra Costa County

The Contra Costa County General Plan designates essentially all of the Ridgeland as open space. The County Open Space-Conservation Plan, adopted in 1973, divides the County into open space and urban areas. The plan substantially increased the amount of planned open space use in the Ridgeland existing at the time of adoption. Other elements of the general plan which are pertinent to the study area include the Recreation Element and the Interim Trails plans, the Scenic Routes Element, the Safety Element and the Seismic Safety Element.

The Recreation Element, which was adopted in 1970, identifies major parks in the study area. The Interim Trails plans, adopted in 1972, propose a comprehensive trails system for the study area. Nearly all of the paved public roads within the study area are proposed as scenic routes by the Scenic Routes Element (1974). The Interim Bicycle Paths plan designates a number of roads in the study area as primary and secondary bicycle paths. The Safety and the Seismic Safety Elements (1975) discuss many topics of concern in the study area including earthquake faults, unstable slopes and landslides and fire hazards.

Areas not designated by the general plan for open space land use are found in several locations at the edge of the study area. Near the City of Martinez, low density single-family residential use is designated for the lower portions of Franklin Canyon and the Alhambra Valley, where such development already exists.

In the vicinity of the San Ramon Valley, under the existing plans, low, medium and high density residential and commercial land uses are proposed along Dougherty Road north from the boundary between Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. Low density residential use is also designated near

Mount Diablo State Park, where the proposed Blackhawk Ranch and Devil Mountain development projects are located.

The General Plan for the San Ramon Valley area is currently under review. The proposed new plan, which has been approved by the County Planning Commission reduces the extent of planned residential land use in the study area. Most planned residential land use along Dougherty Road was changed to open space use due to existing agricultural preserves in the area. In the vicinity of Mount Diablo State Park, planned residential use is reduced to that contained in approved development projects to reflect lands to be dedicated to the State Park. Residential land use areas lie outside of the Ridgeland Study Area on the proposed plan.

Several cities have general plans proposing development which extend into the Ridgeland. Included are the Cities of Pittsburg, Concord, Hercules and Clayton. In the case of Pittsburg, the City has expanded to the south and residential development is proposed well up the overlooking hillsides. Land under Williamson Act contracts have also been affected. The City of Concord has plans for additional development at the fringe of the study area which will utilize part of an agricultural preserve, as well as property currently owned by the State. The City of Hercules recently requested and was granted a sphere of influence change which allows expansion into the study area. For Clayton, large scale development is planned north and west of the central area.

### Santa Clara County

Santa Clara County's Urban Development/Open Space Plan designates all of the Diablo Range as either "long term open space" or "permanent open space." The "permanent open space" designation is applied to all existing publicly owned open space lands, as well as those lands shown as areas for possible future public acquisition. Very low density rural residential uses may be appropriate. The "long term open space" designation is applied to all other lands outside city urban service area boundaries. This second type of open space is defined in the plan as lands which may be suitable for urbanization but which will not be needed for development in the near future, lands that in the future may become permanent open space and lands important for a variety of resource values. Low to very low density rural residential uses may be allowed.

In practice, the privately owned lands designated as "permanent open space" are zoned no differently than those designated "long term open space." Nor, in most cases, are there currently specific plans to buy the privately owned lands designated as "permanent open space." Consequently, the term "permanent open space" is somewhat misleading although the lands to which it is currently applied should continue to be shown as "open space" of one type or another.

In Santa Clara County three cities, Milpitas, San Jose and Morgan Hill, have general plans that include portions of the Ridgeland. These cities also

have urban service areas or city boundaries that extend into the Ridgeland. The Milpitas General Plan designates portions of the Ridgeland for residential purposes; depending on geological conditions, parcel size ranges from one-third acre to 20 acres. Morgan Hill has minimum parcel sizes as low as one half acre; San Jose has a 20-acre minimum.

## *Planning and Special Studies Recommendations*

Alameda, Contra Costa and Santa Clara Counties, plus affected cities:

1. Continue to designate the Ridgeland area as open space in adopted general plans.
2. Review adequacy and update, where appropriate, those general plan elements related to the identification, protection and preservation of the open space resources of the Ridgeland; specifically, the open space, conservation, recreation, scenic highways, seismic safety and safety elements.
3. Conduct studies and adopt policies regarding the impacts of power transmission lines and communication facilities, (radio transmitters and antennas) and pipelines on the scenic resources of the Ridgeland. Identify suitable corridors and sites for the above facilities so as to minimize the impact on resource values.
4. Conduct studies to determine the severity of problems caused by overgrazing. Consider the adoption of policies which will prevent future problems associated with overgrazing.

Alameda County:

1. Designate the Vallecitos Valley and the surrounding hills for agricultural or other open space uses as part of the Livermore-Amador Plan Amendment consideration.
2. Walpert Ridge and other nearby ridges should be placed in agricultural or open space designation in Union City and Hayward.

Contra Costa County:

1. Review the Circulation Element of the County General Plan to reconsider planned routes through the Ridgeland.



Santa Clara County:

1. In the County General Plan, change the term "permanent open space," being applied to privately owned lands in the Ridgeland, to one which more accurately conveys the level and duration of the open space protection.

## *Urban Development Policy*

Urban development policy can play a major role in preserving open space within the Ridgeland by controlling the timing and location of future urban development. Simply stated, urban development policy involves directing urban development over a particular period of time to those areas where it is appropriate and can be provided efficiently with necessary urban services and facilities. Urban development policy is not the same as a "no growth" policy. Urban development policy recognizes that as population increases (as it will, even with lower birth rates), there will be a need to provide additional housing and places of employment. It also recognizes the fact, however, that allowing scattered, leap-frog urban development in order to accommodate these growth needs is unnecessarily costly to the taxpayers who must pay for the services and facilities required. Thus urban development policy can help prevent the unnecessary destruction of open space resources while helping to hold down the costs of government.

The complex problems related to establishing an urban development policy center around the fact that responsibility for important decisions regarding the timing and location of future urban development within most counties is fragmented among a number of different governmental jurisdictions, including Local Agency Formation Commissions, cities, counties, and various special purpose districts which provide urban services and facilities. Also regional, State and Federal agencies play a role in the decision-making process.

Local Agency Formation Commissions were created by State law to discourage urban sprawl and encourage the orderly formation and development of local government agencies based upon local conditions and circumstances. Among their formal powers is the power to review proposed annexations, incorporations, district formations, detachment and the power to delineate spheres of influence.

A sphere of influence boundary delineates the probable ultimate physical boundaries and service area of local agencies. It must be recognized that Local Agency Formation Commissions do not engage in land use planning. It does however provide a mechanism for time-phasing of development. Land use decisions still rest with cities and counties. Existing general plans may have substantial effects on the LAFCO sphere of influence boundaries. County general plans are particularly important in this regard since large areas of open space are under county jurisdiction.

Sphere of influence boundaries are subject to amendment and are required by law to be reviewed periodically. Cities can and do request expansion in sphere of influence boundaries to extend and provide services to upland areas. Local Agency Formation Commissions response to sphere of influence proposals may determine their ultimate success in promoting rational development and preventing urban sprawl.

Counties which have jurisdiction in the Ridgeland areas may undermine the objectives of Local Agency Formation Commissions in sphere determination. Development standards that counties impose will determine the character of the open space which may be preserved. In the absence of sufficient restrictive regulations on minimum lot size, the total number of residential structures in the Ridgeland areas could be substantially increased despite individual LAFCO efforts.

Activities of special districts may also serve to undermine Local Agency Formation Commissions urban development policies. For example, special districts may extend sewer and water lines to district boundaries, thereby providing impetus for future boundary changes. The implementation of coherent development policies therefore require Local Agency Formation Commissions, cities, counties and special purpose districts to work together.

Although Local Agency Formation Commissions may establish a sphere of influence for a particular district that does not include all territory in the district, indicating that the district should be reduced, it can be clearly seen that preservation of the Ridgeland areas depends upon the urban development policies of the numerous agencies which have jurisdiction in and adjacent to the area. County and city policies stress efficient, compact growth next to existing development in conjunction with policies of specific resources and have the effect of keeping the area largely undeveloped. Without question, cooperation among the agencies that have jurisdiction is necessary. Only in this way can concerns for a large area that crosses many jurisdictional boundaries be addressed and resolved in a coordinated fashion.

### Alameda County

In Alameda County, cities provide many services, but other essential needs including water and sewer service are commonly provided by special districts which serve both incorporated and unincorporated areas. If the assumption is made that urban development is dependent upon formalized water and sewer service, areas lying outside sewer and water district sphere of influence boundaries can be considered rural.

LAFCO in Alameda County is in the process of establishing spheres of influence for cities. The adopted sphere for the City of Pleasanton and the Dublin area serve to reinforce the county general plan policy allowing only limited development in the hill area. For the City of Hayward and

the Castro Valley area, only preliminary spheres have been considered. Determination of precise boundaries is pending incorporation studies in San Lorenzo and Castro Valley. The preliminary sphere does not include the extension of the Hayward city limits up to Pleasanton Ridge, but portions of Walpert Ridge are included. Consequently, except for Walpert Ridge, the proposed spheres are outside of the Ridgeland.

In Alameda County, the sphere of influence does not necessarily indicate ultimate boundaries of urbanization for a city or district. Instead the sphere attempts to describe areas with common problems, requiring common solutions. The Alameda County "Policies, Guidelines, Criteria and Procedures" for sphere of influence specify goals which these spheres are intended to achieve. They include insuring orderly development in areas adjacent to a city, community or district; planning between cities, county, and districts, and coordinating standards for development.

Recent action by LAFCO to reduce the sphere of the Livermore Area Recreation and Park District to coincide with Livermore's sphere indicates LAFCO would give favorable consideration to requests for detachment by owners of land in the Ridgeland and outside the sphere. Detachment from the District may alleviate some of the tax burdens confronting agricultural land in the area.

Many agencies, utilities and special districts provide utilities and public facilities to portions of the Ridgeland. All of these service agencies perceive their role to be responsive to public demands, and to act in accordance with existing general plans and zoning on approved project proposals. They consider their function to be limited to provision of services, and not to include determination of land uses, eventual holding capacities or any other function of planning. Under such policy (or absence of policy) agencies have taken action which have induced growth, particularly with respect to water, sewage and road extensions. A current example was the emergency extension of a water main into the Ridgeland by the East Bay Municipal Utility District. The extension occurred during the fire crisis caused by the cutting of eucalyptus trees killed or damaged by frost. Now there are development proposals being made for this area.

### Contra Costa County

In Contra Costa County, the urban sphere of influence adopted by LAFCO is defined by sewer and water district spheres of influence in most areas (incorporated as well as unincorporated) and by municipal spheres of influence where cities provide water and sewer service. The urban sphere of influence is considered to be an ultimate boundary which represents the area in which development requiring urban services is to be contained. It appears that the urban sphere of influence boundary will not be significantly changed in the future. However, several potential problem areas merit discussion as to why significant boundary changes are not anticipated.

First is the Morgan Territory Road-Marsh Creek Road area, where water service was extended in the late 1960's with the formation of an improvement district. The LAFCO sphere of influence for rural level of service calls for modest reductions in water district boundaries at the time of adoption to reflect lands not currently receiving water service. The capacity to serve additional development is limited by the eight inch water main, and a service elevation range of between 760 feet and 880 feet above sea level. The extension of water service was costly and the bonded indebtedness of the improvement district remains high due to the limited tax base of the area.

Another problem area is along State Highway 4 and Rodeo Creek in the western portion of Contra Costa County's Ridgeland where water service is also available. The flat valley bottom land is the site of several industrial and light industrial uses and a golf course, but is otherwise undeveloped. Sewer service is not available, but railroad service is. Development pressure can be expected here in the future. The impact on the Ridgeland will not be great if development can be confined to the area presently within the identified sphere of influence. The presence of agricultural preserves nearby and adjacent to the sphere of influence should aid in maintaining present water service boundaries. The recent expansion of the sphere of influence for the Cities of Hercules and Pinole by approximately 700 acres to include undeveloped land along Refugio Creek, indicates that pressures do exist for development within the Ridgeland area.

In the Walnut Creek-Concord-Clayton area, water district boundaries and urban sphere of influence boundaries extend into the Ridgeland. However, recent public property acquisitions for park and open space purposes by the Cities of Walnut Creek and Concord, County Service Area R-8, and the East Bay Regional Park District along Lime Ridge and Shell Ridge will eliminate development potential here. Moreover, acquisitions by the State expanding Mount Diablo State Park eliminate development potential near Clayton and along Morgan Territory Road. Public purchase of park and open space thus serves to reinforce urban sphere of influence boundaries in the Walnut Creek-Concord-Clayton area on Lime and Shell Ridges and near Mount Diablo State Park. The same situation also exists at other locations in the Ridgeland of Contra Costa County such as in the vicinity of Briones Regional Park. Properties under the Williamson Act also serve to reinforce urban sphere of influence boundaries in the County. It is therefore expected that any change in sphere boundaries in these areas would likely be a reduction rather than an expansion to reflect public purchase and enforceable restrictions.

In Contra Costa County other issues still remain unresolved. A number of districts which provide services of an urban nature are located in the Ridgeland. Included are hospital districts, Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART) and local park and recreation districts. Spheres of influence for these districts should be confined, if possible, to areas within the urban sphere of influence in order to keep rural tax rates at a reasonable level.



## Santa Clara County

The method by which Local Agency Formation Commissions perform their designated functions differs significantly between the three counties of the Ridgeland. In Santa Clara County, cities alone accommodate and provide for urban development. Urban development is not allowed in unincorporated areas (urban development is defined by the County as development having a density greater than one dwelling unit per two and one half acres). Each of the 15 cities in Santa Clara County adopt and submit for LAFCO approval and adoption urban service area boundaries (i.e., spheres of influence), delineating the area within which urban development is currently considered appropriate and which can be provided with urban services and facilities. These boundaries may include existing development together with enough vacant land to accommodate the city's anticipated growth needs for the next five years. As vacant land within the urban service areas is developed, the urban service area boundary can be modified to include additional land. In this way leap-frogging sprawl is prevented and urban services can be planned for and provided in an orderly fashion.

## *Urban Development Policy Recommendations*

Alameda, Contra Costa, and Santa Clara Counties, Local Agency Formation Commissions and affected cities and appropriate special districts:

1. Confine urban development within and adjacent to existing urban areas and outside of the Ridgeland.
2. There should be consistent, strict application of open space plan policies in the Ridgeland. Rezonings, variances and other exceptions that allow small lots, residential uses or other incompatible activities should be discouraged.
3. Each county and its cities should work closely with Local Agency Formation Commissions and special districts to assure that open space land use policies for the Ridgeland are implemented uniformly in the actions taken by each.
4. Sphere of influence or urban service area boundaries, as adopted by Local Agency Formation Commissions, should not be extended further into the Ridgeland.
5. Areas outside adopted sphere of influence or urban service area boundaries should be detached from cities and districts providing the urban services, particularly sewer and domestic water.
6. City annexations should not be approved by LAFCO outside of sphere of influence or urban service areas.

7. Jurisdictions responsible for providing urban services and facilities should use sphere of influence or urban service area boundaries as a basis for planning and constructing these urban facilities.
8. Utilities, special districts and public agencies should recognize the growth-inducing impacts of their actions and actions which stimulate urban growth in the Ridgeland should be given careful consideration.

## *Regulation*

### Zoning

As a tool for preserving open space, zoning is very important since it establishes both the type and intensity of development which will be allowed. Zoning can also provide for special review procedures or other requirements applicable to development proposals in particular areas. In the past, zoning often has been a weak tool for preserving open space due to the frequency with which changes have been made and the political nature of such changes. While the relative impermanence of zoning is still a fact of life, recent changes in State law are intended to make it less subject to arbitrary amendment. Specifically, cities and counties are now required to have their zoning conform to the open space element of their general plans. Thus, if an area is shown as open space on the general plan, the zoning for that area must be compatible.

Zoning ordinances sometimes allow for additional uses within a particular zoning district if a use permit is obtained. Use permits are a convenient device for reviewing proposed uses which need to be considered on an individual basis to determine whether they will be compatible with adjacent land uses. They can, however, become loopholes for allowing uses not actually consistent with the intent of the zoning district. Consequently, use permit procedures and the types of uses actually allowed through use permits should be reviewed periodically. Zoning then acts as a means for a local agency to shape the character of the jurisdiction, both in the developed and undeveloped portions. Zoning can influence the location, amount and type of development. Many factors determine the zoning districts that are used and the extent to which they influence development; in turn, choices that the regulating agency makes determine the effectiveness of zoning in preserving resources.

Due to the range of ways that it may be used, zoning can be very effective in preserving natural resources while the land remains under private ownership. In areas where the scenic value is exceptional, regulation

may assure that development occurs in a way that does not alter the esthetic quality; this might mean a combination of low-density and design control. Land that could be used for resource production, such as agriculture, may be preserved by zoning that is sensitive to these values. However, zoning cannot ensure that agriculture will continue even if the land is not developed; this would be dependent on other factors.

### Alameda County

In the unincorporated areas of Alameda County, over 95 percent of the Ridgelands are zoned Agriculture (A) with a minimum lot area of 100 acres. Another four percent is zoned for rural residential uses with varying lot sizes, usually five acres or larger. These are areas of existing development and additional land division is prohibited.

In 1972, Alameda County significantly downzoned agricultural land by changing minimum lot size in the A District from five acres to 100 acres. Existing parcels under 100 acres, which were recorded legal building sites under separate ownership, remained legal building sites after the action. Subdivision into parcels smaller than 100 acres stopped. Under the action, the A District became an exclusive agricultural district implementing general plan proposals and recognizing productivity of land. The revised A District stopped speculative division of land and scattered residential development.

Definition and interpretation of "outdoor recreation facility," allowed as a conditional use in the A District of Alameda County, may be inconsistent with intent of the District and goals of this study. Uses such as tennis centers, equestrian centers, health spas, nudist colonies and off-road vehicle parks, with various "accessory" uses such as restaurants and residences, may cause problems of intensity and overuse. Intensive recreational development may foster non-recreational development through the attraction of people and their need for urban services. Uses also may result in resource damage and serious agricultural conflicts. Certain forms of recreational activity need to be confined to limited areas where resource damage can be minimized and controlled.

Alameda County policy recognizes the need to avoid unplanned proliferation of residential uses in outlying areas while acknowledging demand for semi-rural living. Rural residential zoning is limited to areas shown on the County general plan for "Suburban Residential," and areas with existing access and adequate water and sewage disposal facilities. Detailed environmental and public service analyses based on ultimate development potential accompany any consideration of rural residential zoning.

Cities in Alameda County generally have less restrictive zoning districts with smaller minimum lot sizes. Fremont has special provisions regulating

open space lands in its Open Space (O-S) Zoning District; all land designated open space by the City's open space plan is placed in the O-S District. Within areas designated prime agricultural land, minimum lot size is 20 acres; within other areas 10 acres. If slopes are less than 30 percent and residential development is not restricted by soils, geologic, groundwater or landslide conditions, residential uses including multiple dwellings at densities up to one unit per acre are allowed. Areas not to be developed are subject to an open space easement, scenic restriction or other device guaranteeing that the area remain undeveloped. All substantial uses in the Fremont O-S District are subject to site plan and architectural approval. Density transfer is permitted with a conditional use permit. In Union City agricultural zoning allows a residence on minimum lot area of five acres; residential lots as small as 6000 square feet are permitted with a planned unit development (PUD) permit. Agricultural zoning in Hayward allows a residence on one acre lots. Zoning which requires minimum road frontage significantly constrains development because of the absence of roads in Hayward's Ridgeland area.

### Contra Costa County

In Contra Costa County, approximately 93 percent of the Ridgeland areas are zoned for agricultural use under the General Agriculture (A-2) District and Agricultural Preserve (A-4) District. Approximately three percent of the Ridgeland areas is zoned Forestry-Recreation (F-R). Another three percent is zoned Planned Unit District (P-1) and other residential zoning districts. The remaining one percent of the Ridgeland areas is comprised of a variety of zoning districts.

The A-2 District is predominant in Contra Costa County's Ridgeland areas (55 percent). The district is applied to EBMUD's watershed lands and to many public park lands in addition to private lands. However, it is not strictly an open space zoning district, since it is also used as a holding zone in areas designated on the County general plan to convert to urban uses. The A-2 District specifies a minimum lot size of five acres. Uses of an urban nature such as churches, hospitals, medical and dental offices and medical clinics, are permitted through the land use permit procedure. The five-acre minimum lot size of the A-2 District is small for open space zoning purposes. Moreover, the five-acre standard has not always been strictly enforced in past property division approvals due to the granting of lot size variances. Although the entire Ridgeland areas cannot be subdivided into five-acre lots due to limited access, limited water supply and other restrictions, the A-2 District does permit continued subdivision in certain areas.

Because of the small minimum lot size, the A-2 District does not appear to provide adequate long-term protection for open space in the Ridgeland areas. The residential development in the vicinity of Morgan Territory Road near Mount Diablo State Park provides an example of the type of development



which can occur under the A-2 District. Much of the development is a result of the minor subdivision process and some properties have been divided more than once. It is interesting to note from the map which displays the location of agricultural preserves in the Ridgелands (see Lands under Williamson Act Contracts Map) that many properties fronting major paved roads are not under Williamson Act contracts. This may represent an intent on the part of landowners with property zoned A-2 District to keep the option of future subdivision open.

In Contra Costa County increasing the minimum lot size for the A-2 District in the Ridgелands to 100 acres, for example, would not only reduce subdivision activity but could also promote additional Williamson Act contracts. Property speculation as currently found in the Ridgелands would be substantially reduced. Individual expectations of the future of development in the Ridgелands would be altered and a firm public commitment to the preservation of open space would be made.

Contra Costa County's A-4 District specifies a minimum lot size of 100 acres and is applied to all properties under Williamson Act contracts. Approximately 40 percent of the County is affected by this zoning. The range of permitted uses is much narrower than the A-2 District and is essentially limited to commercial agricultural activities. Use of this district in the Ridgелands continues to increase each year as additional properties are placed under Williamson Act contracts.

A district which is of limited usefulness in Contra Costa County is the F-R District. This district specifies a minimum lot size of one-half acre. Allowable activities include all uses permitted with or without land use permits in single-family residential districts, plus summer homes, hotels and golf courses. Use of this district in the Ridgелands is essentially limited to lands owned by the East Bay Regional Park District and the State of California (Mount Diablo State Park).

Although the A-2 and F-R Districts are defined as consistent with the general plan's open space land use designation of the Ridgелands, not all Ridgелands zoning is consistent. One example of nonconforming zoning is the Heavy Industrial District found at two locations in the Ridgелands of Contra Costa County. Heavy industrial zoning is not included among the districts listed as compatible with the open space land use by Contra Costa County's Open Space Conservation Plan. The County has a program to bring zoning into conformity with the general plan and inconsistencies will be eliminated soon.

Small portions of the Ridgелands within Contra Costa County fall within a variety of residential districts with minimum lot sizes ranging from 6000 to 65,000 square feet. In areas of rural residential development the 100-acre minimum lot size suggested earlier may be unrealistic and difficult to justify. Although it is possible that a limited amount of additional residential development could be tolerated without substantial adverse impact, comprehensive study would be required to determine whether this is the case and to document the impacts which would be expected.

## Santa Clara County

Santa Clara County's zoning in the Ridgeland is almost entirely either Exclusive Agriculture (A) or Residential and Agricultural (A-1). In general, the Exclusive Agriculture is applied to lands under Williamson Act contracts, which constitute approximately 75 percent of the privately owned lands in the area. The Residential and Agricultural Zone is applied to most of the privately owned lands not under Williamson Act contracts.

With the A Zone, only agricultural and related uses are permitted, although the construction of residences for the owners or lessees, members of the owner's family, and employees of the owner is allowable. A limited number of additional uses may be permitted if a use permit is obtained. The A-1 Zone allows essentially the same uses as the Agricultural Zone, plus any other uses the Santa Clara County Planning Commission deems appropriate with a use permit.

The minimum parcel sizes established by Santa Clara County's zoning vary depending upon where the property is located and whether or not it is under a Williamson Act contract. Foothill lands not under Williamson Act contracts are zoned to require from two and a half to 10 acres, depending upon the slope of the natural terrain (the steeper the land, the larger the minimum parcel size).

Lands in the foothills under Williamson Act are zoned to require 10-acre parcels if they were entered prior to 1975 (those entered in 1975 or later are zoned to require 20-acre parcels). Thus, lands under Williamson Act contracts could be subdivided into 10-acre parcels and a home could be built on each parcel, provided other land development regulations could be met. From 1966, when the Act took effect, until 1976, there were no major proposals to do so.

In 1976, however, Santa Clara County received several applications to create rural residential subdivisions on 10-acre parcels in the Diablo Range on lands under Williamson Act contracts. One involved the creation of 36 parcels on 370 acres; another involved creation of 19 parcels on a 600-acre site, with the potential for 40 more parcels on the remaining two-thirds of the site. Since both of these development proposals were in conformance with the County's 10-acre zoning requirement, they were approved by the Planning Commission and review and approval by the Board of Supervisors was not required.

The approval of these rural residential subdivisions on lands under Williamson Act contracts sets an alarming precedent. First of all, they appear to be contrary to Santa Clara County's policy to preserve grazing lands. Secondly, they appear to be inconsistent with the intent of the Williamson Act. And thirdly, they raise a basic public policy question--namely, is the public receiving sufficient benefit from the creation of these property tax sheltered rural residential estates to justify the

public subsidy they will be receiving? Since these subdivisions did not require the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors' approval, they did not have to consider and make a decision concerning these issues.

Within the intermountain valley areas located beyond the crest of the first major ridgelines, the zoning for lands which entered into Williamson Act contracts prior to 1975 is the same as in the foothills, i.e., 10 acres. Lands not under such contracts are zoned to require from five to 40 acres, depending upon the steepness of the terrain.

In the remote areas of the Ridgeland, all lands, regardless of whether or not they are under Williamson Act contracts, are zoned for 20 to 160-acre parcels, again depending upon the slope of the natural terrain. This same zoning is applied to lands within the intermountain valley areas which entered into Williamson Act contracts in 1975 or later.

Most of Santa Clara County's current zoning for the Ridgeland was established as a result of its Diablo Range Study completed in 1975. This study concluded that one of the best ways to preserve the area in open space was to protect the continuation of grazing as the predominant land use. It further concluded that public acquisition by the County in the Diablo Range for park purposes should be limited due to potential increased problems for ranchers, including trespassing, vandalism, and grass fires which might result if more people were drawn into the area.

It can be questioned, however, whether the zoning adopted as a result of that study is in fact adequate to keep the land in parcels large enough to be economically viable for grazing and to prevent the introduction of other uses incompatible with grazing, particularly in the scenic foothills adjacent to the Santa Clara Valley.

Santa Clara County's two and a half to 10-acre slope density zoning applied to these foothills rising from the Santa Clara Valley is of particular concern since it involves the portion of the Ridgeland most visible to the County's over one million residents. The present zoning leaves the door open for land division and rural residential development which could pose as much or more of a threat to grazing lands than additional public recreation areas might. Furthermore, it would take relatively little development on these open, grassy hillsides and ridgetops to significantly change their existing scenic open space character.

The minimum parcel sizes established in Santa Clara County's zoning for the intermountain valley areas and the remote areas, although larger than those in the foothills, also appear to be inadequate to prevent rural residential development that could be incompatible with ranching. Flat areas within the intermountain valley areas could be divided into parcels as small as five acres, and flat lands in the remote areas such as the San Antonio Valley could be divided into 20-acre parcels. Compared to the three counties adjacent to it, Santa Clara County has the least restrictive zoning on its grazing lands (Alameda County has a 100-acre minimum parcel size and Stanislaus and Merced Counties each require 160 acres).

One of the major reasons Santa Clara County allowed these smaller parcel sizes was the recognition that Federal Inheritance Tax laws sometimes made it necessary for family owned ranches to split off parcels to sell in order to pay inheritance taxes. As discussed in the previous chapter (State Inheritance Tax/Federal Estate Tax), Congress, in 1976, made several important changes in the Federal Inheritance Tax laws to reduce the inheritance tax burden on family owned farms and ranches. Consequently, the rationale for continuing to allow these smaller parcel sizes in the Diablo Range has been largely removed.

Within these intermountain valley areas and remote areas, factors other than zoning may prevent much additional rural residential development. These limiting factors, which include lack of water and road access, will undoubtedly greatly inhibit rural residential development in the area, but are unlikely to prevent it entirely (recent California history is overflowing with examples of remote or "undevelopable" areas being subdivided and sold for second home or rural residential development). Santa Clara County should monitor land division and development activity in these areas and should consider rezoning if it appears that development, incompatible with ranching, is being proposed.

#### Other Land Use Regulations

While recognizing that zoning is a valuable method for preserving resources of the Ridgeland, its inherent weaknesses must be acknowledged as well; i.e., the ease with which zoning may be circumvented or altered. This points up the need for firm intent by the policy-making body to stand behind a zoning designation that acts to implement open space plans and policies. Since zoning alone can be insensitive to the intrinsic resource values of the land (agricultural capability, scenic quality, wildlife habitat value, etc.), other regulations used in conjunction with zoning can strengthen it. There are a number of other types of land use regulations that can serve as tools to help protect open space resources either directly or indirectly. In general, these regulations require additional review procedures or permits for proposed development-related activities which may serve to minimize the damage proposed development may do to the landscape.

#### Alameda County

Alameda County has adopted a "Specific Plan for Areas of Environmental Significance" which establishes policies for riparian areas and scenic routes. The plan uses site development review as its major implementation tool. Major projects in such areas not subject to other review such as subdivision regulations, conditional use permits, etc. would undergo a site development review. The County may use a similar "specific plan" approach for other areas of environmental significance in the future.



Reclassification to the Planned Development (PD) District is an option available to a developer. The district allows a mixture of land uses and flexibility in building design and siting techniques, and is specially adaptable to residential development in hill areas, when utilities are available. The district allows clustering on the most buildable areas and regulation of all aspects of construction.

Recognizing the need to avoid unplanned proliferation of rural residential areas while acknowledging the demand for semi-rural living, the Board of Supervisors adopted a "Policy for the Location, Zoning, and Servicing of Rural Residential Uses" in 1973. This included policies on limiting rural residential uses; on extensive analyses on extent and location of development; on consideration of significant adverse impacts prior to rezoning; on road access to rural residential concentrations; and on availability of water supply and sewage disposal facilities.

Land division is regulated under the Alameda County Subdivision Ordinance. The Planning Commission has approval authority for subdivision into five or more parcels, and the Planning Director has approval authority for minor subdivisions. Except when exempted by the State Subdivision Map Act, all subdivisions require filing a Final Map or Parcel Map and are subject to regulations of design and improvements. Subdivisions are required to be consistent with applicable general and specific plans, zoning, physical constraints, and environmental considerations to be approved. Subdivisions requiring a final map must have domestic water and a sewage disposal system determined adequate by the County Health Officer.

### Contra Costa County

Development within the study area is given essentially the same type of review and requires the same types of permits as development outside the study area. Within County government, the planning, building inspection, public works and health departments are principally responsible for development review.

The Planning Department checks general plan compliance, zoning and land use and prepares conditions of approval for proposed development. The department functions as a "clearinghouse" for comments from other departments and agencies. The Department also prepares environmental impact reports and supervises the preparation of geologic studies in Special Studies Zones. The Building Inspection Department issues grading and building permits. Soils studies are required for major subdivisions. Soils studies are prepared for minor subdivisions if landslides or significant slope instability problems are suspected. The Public Works Department reviews proposed development for a variety of reasons, including encroachment permits, road widening and improvements, right-of-way dedication, drainage permits, drainage improvements and drainage easements. The Health Department issues permits for wells and septic

systems based on regulations to protect public health and maintain the safe and efficient operation of these facilities. Other agencies which frequently review and comment on projects include utility districts, fire districts, school districts and nearby cities. Some projects fall under the special concern of agencies such as the California State Department of Fish and Game which has jurisdiction over streams and creeks.

### Santa Clara County

Santa Clara County requires grading permits for grading in the foothills and mountains. Geologic review is required if the area involved is shown as being potentially geologically unstable on the County's geologic hazards map. Proposals involving building site approval are reviewed by either the County's Land Development Committee or its Architectural and Site Approval Committee. Major subdivisions (i.e., those creating five or more lots) are reviewed by both the Land Development Committee and the Planning Commission; minor subdivisions (four or fewer parcels) are reviewed only by the Land Development Committee. Until recently, minor subdivisions were exempt from the environmental assessment requirement; now they are not.

## *Regulation Recommendations*

### Zoning

Alameda, Contra Costa and Santa Clara Counties, plus affected cities:

1. Review permitted uses and densities within existing open space zoning districts and delete those which are not in conformity with the adopted open space element of the general plan and with the open space resource values of the Ridgelands.
2. A basic minimum lot size of 100 acres should be considered in agricultural and grazing areas in the Ridgelands.
3. Review current zoning policies of all lands under Williamson Act contracts and change those which are inconsistent with the preservation of grazing in the Ridgelands.
4. Zoning on the periphery of existing public parklands in the Ridgelands should be consistent with the management of those public areas.

#### Alameda County:

1. Alameda County should review definitions and interpretation of "outdoor recreation facility" in its Agricultural (A) District. Guidelines should be developed for appropriate placement and regulation of intensive uses in the category.
2. Cities should apply large lot zoning regulations to lands within the Ridgeland. A basic minimum lot size of 100 acres should be employed by the agricultural or open space district.

#### Contra Costa County:

1. New open space zoning district or districts should be developed which would specifically pertain to all open space uses (e.g., agriculture, grazing, recreation, mining, quarrying, watershed, and wildlife habitat). A basic minimum lot size of 100 acres should be used for agriculture and grazing. Smaller minimum lot sizes might be used for other open space uses and to accommodate present parcel size distribution.
2. Use of the General Agriculture (A-2) and Forestry Recreation (F-R) District in the study area should be reconsidered and reduced or eliminated after the adoption of the new open space zoning district(s).
3. Properties with zoning not in conformance with the general plan should be rezoned to a district which conforms to planned open space land use.
4. Permitted uses in the Agricultural Preserve (A-4) District should be expanded beyond commercial agriculture to include non-commercial agricultural activities.

#### Other Land Use Regulations

#### Alameda, Contra Costa and Santa Clara Counties, plus affected cities:

1. Consideration should be given to restricting division of lands under Williamson Act contracts.
2. All cities and counties should adopt or revise grading ordinances to protect Ridgeland open space resources.
3. Require design review in the Ridgeland for all proposed development within adopted corridors adjacent to designated scenic highways.

4. Consideration should be given to the adoption of regulations to protect scenic values of prominent ridgelines and slopes visible from urban areas.
5. Adopt regulations to protect streamside resources.
6. Additional rural residential development which is dependent upon wells and septic tank systems should be strictly regulated.
7. Additional roads in the Ridgeland areas should be discouraged. Road improvements should be at the lowest level necessary for maintenance of public utilities or for conducting ranching operations or for providing access to public parks.
8. The East Bay Regional Park District, the Santa Clara County Park and Recreation Department and other public park agencies should become more actively involved in evaluating development activity and land use proposals around parklands.
9. The East Bay Regional Park District, the Santa Clara County Park and Recreation Department and other public park agencies should review their acquisition, development and management programs to minimize their impacts on adjacent agricultural lands.

## *Property Tax Relief*

As discussed in the previous chapter, property taxes frequently are part of the problem in preserving open space in the Ridgeland areas; high taxes increase the pressure to sell marginal grazing lands or subdivide and develop parcels. Ways to ease the property tax burden on landowners are available in California; these help to retain grazing or other uses of lands in the study area. In this sense the property tax is not only part of the problem, but part of the solution. Property tax relief may decrease the economic rationale for converting land to urban uses. However, it does have limitations; programs for property tax relief are voluntary and the landowner must be willing to continue grazing the land or otherwise to keep it undeveloped.

In California, there are two basic means by which owners of open space lands who wish to retain them in open space uses may obtain property tax relief. One involves the use of the California Land Conservation Act of 1965, known as the Williamson Act; the other involves the use of open space easements. The Williamson Act is by far the more commonly used of the two, although both operate in a very similar fashion and have essentially the same effects.



Originally, the Williamson Act was established to preserve those productive farmlands of the State which, due to their proximity to urban areas, were being lost to urban development. The Act enables local governments to establish agricultural preserves wherein land use is restricted by regulation by entering into a 10-year voluntary contract with a landowner. Preserves are to be no less than 100 acres, but may be smaller if the size is consistent with the local governments' general plan. Unless notice of non-renewal is given, one year is automatically added to the contract period on the anniversary date. Within the preserve, the property tax assessment is based on the land's current use value (agriculture) rather than on its highest and best use (urban), thereby giving the owner a tax break. If not renewed, assessed value begins to rise in the third year so as to arrive at full value by the tenth year.

Since its enactment, the Williamson Act has been amended several times to broaden the range of permitted uses within a preserve to include recreation and open space. Recreation is defined as use of the land by the public for hiking, picnicking, camping, swimming, boating, hunting, fishing, outdoor games and sports. The owner, if he decides to allow public use of his land, is permitted to charge a reasonable fee, but if the recreation use is allowed without charge, the county board of supervisors may indemnify a landowner against claims arising from such a use. Moreover, the owner's agreement that his land be used for free, public recreation is not to be construed as an implied dedication to such use. Open space uses are those which preserve the natural characteristics, beauty or openness of an area for the benefit and enjoyment of the public. Permitted open space uses include scenic highway corridors, wildlife habitat areas, salt ponds, managed wetlands and submerged areas. Additional uses may be permitted in the preserve if the local government determines that they are compatible with agricultural, recreational and open space uses.

Out of the total 846,000 acres in the three county study area, 506,000 acres were under Williamson Act contracts, as of the 1976 tax year, which is about 70 percent of the private lands and about 60 percent of the total (see Lands under Williamson Act Contracts Map). By individual jurisdiction, the breakdown is as follows:

<u>Ridgeland Study Area</u>	<u>Total Acres</u>	<u>Public Acres</u>	<u>Private Acres</u>	<u>Williamson Act Acres</u>	
Alameda County	264,000	54,000	210,000	176,000	(84%)
Contra Costa County	167,000	38,000	129,000	60,000	(46%)
Santa Clara County	415,000	52,000	362,000	270,000	(74%)
Totals	846,000	144,000	701,000	506,000	

Although the State law establishes certain basic guidelines, it is largely up to individual jurisdictions to determine the geographic areas in which the Williamson Act may be used, as well as the criteria they will use to determine which lands within these areas will be eligible for Williamson

Act tax relief. Individual jurisdictions may also choose not to use the Williamson Act at all. The three counties have declared virtually the entire Ridgeland area to be within an "agricultural preserve" and thus nearly all privately owned open space lands within the area are eligible for Williamson Act property tax relief, if they meet minimum acreage and land use criteria.

While the percentage of eligible lands under Williamson Act contracts in the Ridgeland area is quite high, it must be noted that most of the lands under contract are more remote and less subject to development pressures. Some landowners nearest the urban area may be keeping their lands out of the Act because they feel their prospects for development in the near future are relatively good. In part, their expectations may be based upon past or present urban development policies of the cities or the counties permitting scattered, leapfrog development. Adoption of effective urban development policies in each county by the Local Agency Formation Commission, the county, and the cities adjacent to the Ridgeland area would probably alter prospects for urban development in the Ridgeland area and result in more of the closer-in lands coming under Williamson Act contracts.

Smaller parcels of land are generally not eligible for Williamson Act contracts. Some of the undeveloped parcels may possess important and specific open space resources whose preservation would be in the public interest. These lands should be considered for possible property tax relief to help keep them in open space. For smaller parcels which do not qualify for Williamson Act contracts, open space easements can be initiated by the landowner. Open space easements involve voluntary contracts which landowners sign agreeing to keep their lands in open space uses for a minimum of 10 years. In return, their lands are taxed based on their actual income-producing value, just as with Williamson Act contracts.

Although the use of open space easements has been possible for a number of years, only one such easement has been granted to a county within the Ridgeland Study Area. That easement was given to Contra Costa County by an archery club and applies to their archery range. It should be emphasized that, as with lands under Williamson Act contract, open space easements do not grant the public the right to enter onto the lands involved unless the landowner so agrees. One of the major reasons open space easements have not received greater use is that the Williamson Act has been used so extensively in their place. Local governments should consider possible use of open space easement contracts to provide property tax relief to certain types of open space lands, particularly smaller parcels which are to remain undeveloped.

The reduced tax assessment on open space lands under Williamson Act contracts or open space easements results in reduced property tax revenues to local governments and special districts or may shift the property tax burden to other lands and buildings. This loss of portions of the tax base of agricultural counties led the State to enact in 1971 the Open

Space Subvention Act. This meant that local governments would be able to receive from the State's general fund, partial reimbursement for reduced property taxes on lands under Williamson Act contract. The reimbursement is based on a sliding scale with prime agricultural lands receiving more than non-prime lands. Consequently, the reimbursement for Williamson Act lands in the Ridgeland (non-prime) would be a lesser amount. From a countywide perspective, the decrease in total assessed valuation and property tax revenues is relatively small for the three counties since urban lands and buildings constitute the major portion of their total assessed valuation.

IMPACT OF WILLIAMSON ACT CONTRACTS ON  
COUNTYWIDE TAX BASES--FY 1976-77

	<u>Contra Costa County</u>	<u>Alameda County</u>	<u>Santa Clara County</u>
Decrease in countywide assessed valuation as result of Williamson Act contracts.	\$ 8,600,000	\$ 14,200,000	\$ 48,400,000
Total countywide assessed valuation as actually assessed.	\$3,200,000,000	\$4,100,000,000	\$4,400,000,000
Percent decrease in total countywide assessed valuation as result of Williamson Act contracts.	0.3 percent	0.3 percent	1.1 percent

The above overall dollar decrease to the counties would be even less when subvention payment by the State is considered. Compared to what it would cost for the public to purchase these lands outright, the revenue reduction or property tax shift is a rather minimal price to pay to assure they will be kept in open space uses.

That there have been no cancellations in the three county Ridgeland Study Area emphasizes the contentions of landowners contacted during the information-gathering phase of this study. They contend that Williamson Act contracts are regarded as long-term by the property owner. Backing out of a contract is viewed as being both difficult and uneconomic. In the study area, it would appear that most landowners have signed contracts so as to ease their property tax burden and not to gain short-term tax benefit for long-term speculation. This is borne out by the fact that the great majority of the lands in the study area have a limited speculative value. It makes good economic sense then for those Ridgeland landowners who wish to keep their land in open space by ranching to opt for enrolling their lands under the Williamson Act.

Another means of providing additional property tax relief to certain open

space lands within the Ridgелands would be to detach them from the cities and/or special districts, such as hospital districts, which annexed them, but provide little or no direct benefit to these largely uninhabited lands. Detachment may, however, result in significant revenue losses to particular special districts. In such instances, consideration should be given to consolidating them with other governmental entities. Similar consideration should be given in situations where property tax revenues to particular special districts are significantly reduced as a result of open space lands being placed under Williamson Act contracts or open space easements.

### Alameda County

In Alameda County the underlying zoning on all preserve lands under Williamson Act contracts has a minimum parcel size of 100 acres. Alameda County's agricultural preserve policy specifies that subdivision not be allowed for parcels of less than 100 acres and that the Board of Supervisors approve any division of a parcel within a preserve. The County has further indicated that, in view of their policy regarding open space preservation, it would consider the possibility of requiring even larger minimums being established where appropriate. There have been several divisions within an agricultural preserve, but the splits did not violate the integrity of the zoning or the preserve. In the Alameda County portion of the study area, there have been no cancellations of contracts nor have any notices of non-renewal been filed.

### Contra Costa County

Contra Costa County has had no cancellations of Williamson Act contracts in the Ridgелands. The County has approved minor subdivisions of agricultural preserve lands creating several new lots ranging in size from 18 to 40 acres (20 acres is the minimum lot size permitted under the County's A-4 District). County policy regarding the approval of new contracts is a 100-acre minimum for isolated parcels. For those parcels abutting existing agricultural preserves, 20 acres is the minimum size, providing the addition results in the creation of at least a 100-acre parcel.

## *Property Tax Relief Recommendations*

Alameda, Contra Costa and Santa Clara Counties, plus affected cities:

1. The counties should continue to encourage the use of Williamson Act contracts in the Ridgелands to protect grazing lands and other significant open space resources.



2. The counties and cities should make use of open space easement contracts in appropriate locations in the Ridgelands.
3. Assessments on grazing lands under Williamson Act contracts should be changed from a per acre basis to one based on an established maximum number of Animal Unit Months (AUM) for each parcel.

## *Public Acquisition and Management*

As a tool for protecting and preserving open space, the acquiring of land by a public park and recreation agency is unquestionably the most effective. Since it allows maximum control over subsequent land use, acquisition virtually guarantees that the land will remain in protected open space--except for those limited areas developed for facility-oriented recreation use. Within the Ridgelands Study Area, State, regional and local parklands total more than 78,000 acres. The East Bay Regional Park District has the largest holdings, some 37,000 acres in all, nearly 7000 of which are presently in a land bank status and scheduled to be opened to the public in the near future. The California Department of Parks and Recreation administers two units of the State park system together totalling about 25,000 acres. Santa Clara County's Department of Parks and Recreation, administering nearly 14,000 acres of park area, is the third major park agency. Additional open space and parklands administered by Contra Costa County, the Cities of Concord and San Jose together comprising about 2500 acres are also located within the study area (see Publicly Owned Open Space Lands Map).

The existing policies and programs of the public agencies providing park and recreation services within the Ridgelands have a direct bearing on the amount, type, location and timing of future acquisitions. The purpose of this section is to look at these policies, evaluate their effect on future acquisitions in the Ridgelands and how much of a role this particular tool will play in protecting the open space values of the study area.

### East Bay Regional Park District

Currently, the East Bay Regional Park District operates 26 park facilities within the study area. These include regional parks, recreation areas, wilderness preserves, and trails. They are distributed throughout the Alameda and Contra Costa portions of the study area. Regional parks such as Wildcat, Tilden, Redwood and Chabot are located adjacent to the developed sections of the larger East Bay cities, while others, such as Sunol and Las Trampas Regional Wildernesses, are more remotely located. The parks located next to urbanized areas, not surprisingly, are those which were acquired many years ago when the District was first formed. The

preservation of portions of the natural ridgetops of the Oakland-Berkeley hills is due, in large part, to the prudent purchases by the District, giving the residents of the adjacent East Bay cities and San Franciscans alike a scenic viewshed which otherwise would likely have been altered by development.

The East Bay Regional Park District's Master Plan is intended to guide parkland acquisition program for the next 10 to 20 years. Since its adoption in 1973, the District has acquired several sites located within the Ridgeland which were shown in the Master Plan as having parkland potential. Included in these acquisitions are sites such as the 4236-acre Rowell Ranch and the 625-acre landmark known as Mission Peak. Moreover, there are a number of additional sites and identified trail corridors in the study area which the Master Plan shows as potential acquisitions. The programmed distribution of the District's funds, by parkland classification and by geographic area, indicate that these sites and corridors will be acquired in the near future.

## California

The State of California operates two large State parks within the Ridgeland, Mount Diablo in the northern portion and in the south, Henry W. Coe State Park. Mount Diablo, in existence since the early 1930's, has just been expanded by more than 1600 acres. Future programmed acquisition calls for an additional 1800 acres. Two large-scale development projects which have been approved by Contra Costa County will include the dedication of a total of 2600 acres to Mount Diablo State Park. The dedication will occur over a number of years as the projects are developed in phases. Also, funds have been earmarked for Mount Diablo State Park from the State Coastal Bond Act. Henry W. Coe State Park, acquired by the State in 1959, may be expanded in the near future to include several thousand acres of adjacent public domain lands currently administered by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management. As funds become available, the State will attempt to acquire additional private land holdings within the park.

At the present time it appears unlikely that California will be adding any additional park units within the Ridgeland. This is substantiated first by the latest version of the California Outdoor Recreation Resources Plan, prepared by the California Department of Parks and Recreation. This document takes a comprehensive look at existing and future outdoor recreation needs for the State both as a whole and for each of the 10 individual planning districts into which the State is divided. The section of the plan dealing with Planning District 4 (the nine county San Francisco Bay Area), which includes the three county Ridgeland Study Area, contains a categorical listing for the type of park and recreation facility in which Planning District 4 is most deficient. Although multi-purpose recreation areas are included in this list, water-oriented recreation needs received by far the most attention. Secondly, the

California Department of Parks and Recreation has in recent years been giving increased attention to providing outdoor recreation opportunities close to home for people living in the metropolitan areas. This interest has most recently manifested itself with the enactment of the State's Urban Open Space and Recreation Program. This is a three year, \$25 million/year grant program to cities, counties, park and recreation districts for the acquisition and development of park and recreation areas within the most heavily populated areas of the State. The intent of the program is to meet the State's most urgent and unmet urban recreation needs--it is not intended for large-scale open space preservation in rural areas.

### Santa Clara County

The third major park and recreation agency within the Ridgeland Study Area is the Santa Clara County Department of Parks and Recreation, administering five units, totalling nearly 14,000 acres of land and water. Included in this figure is the recent 9500-acre acquisition for the Grant Ranch, which has not yet been opened to the public. The addition of this large park unit more than tripled the amount of park and recreation acreage in the Santa Clara County portion of the Ridgeland. In the study area, funds have been allotted for additions to Grant Ranch and Ed Levin County Parks. With the above additions, the County will have completed for the foreseeable future its planned acquisition program within the Ridgeland Study Area. The County's limited plans for additional acquisitions in this area reflect the fact that it has already acquired close to 14,000 acres divided among five separate sites along the length of the Diablo Range and must weigh future acquisitions in the area against priorities for acquisitions in other parts of the County.

In light of these limited acquisition plans, the County's relatively permissive two and one half to 10-acre zoning for the foothills (see Regulation section), and its recent approval of rural residential subdivisions on lands under Williamson Act contracts (see Property Tax Relief section), it appears that practically none of the rolling, grassy foothills of the Diablo Range visible from the Santa Clara Valley are being protected as truly permanent open space, nor are there as yet any plans to take action to preserve them as such.

If in fact the residents of Santa Clara County wish to see portions of these foothills permanently preserved in their natural state, action must be taken in the near future. The major alternatives for possible action center around stricter regulation of land use and/or some form of public acquisition. Stricter land use regulations could help preserve open space over the short run, but would not guarantee permanent protection. Furthermore, even if the County adopts stricter land use controls, there is still the possibility that these foothill lands could be annexed to a city with less restrictive regulations.

This leaves public acquisition as the only permanent type of protection for the foothills of the Diablo Range. If public acquisition is to be considered, it must be recognized first of all that most of these lands are not particularly well suited for intensive recreational use. Thus, it would be difficult to justify diverting funds from existing city and county park funds for such acquisition, especially since there are many other sites in Santa Clara County which could be acquired for parks.

One other possibility would be to establish a new local agency to acquire open space lands or rights in land, such as open space easements, in the Diablo Range foothills similar to the way in which the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District is acquiring open space lands in the northern half of the Santa Cruz Mountains of Santa Clara County. This open space agency could be established under the same existing state enabling legislation as the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, either as an independent special district with its own elected board of directors or as an agency with the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors as its board of directors. Under either arrangement, the agencies would have their own sources of funding as provided by State law and thus need not divert funds from existing city and county park programs. Lands acquired by such an agency would not have to be used exclusively for park purposes. In fact, they could be leased for grazing if it were felt that that would minimize problems for adjacent privately owned lands being used for grazing, as is now being done by the East Bay Regional Park District.

Of all the possible alternatives for providing permanent protection of open space lands in the Diablo Range foothills in Santa Clara County, establishment of an open space agency under state enabling legislation for the creation of regional parks or open space districts appears to be the most promising. It should be given serious consideration by the residents and elected officials of Santa Clara County.

## *Public Acquisition and Management Recommendations*

East Bay Regional Park District, Santa Clara County and other agencies responsible for managing public park and open space land:

1. The East Bay Regional Park District and Santa Clara County should continue to acquire parklands in the study area in conformance with their adopted plans.
2. High priority in park acquisition in the Ridgeland should be given to those lands with recreation potential nearest to the urban fringe. High priority should also be given to the acquisition of lands which will protect the viewsheds and watersheds of existing public parklands.
3. Public access to lands acquired for public park



purposes should take place within a reasonable period of time following acquisition.

4. The management and development plans for public parklands in the Ridgeland should be designed to reflect the presence of adjacent privately-owned grazing lands.
5. Maintain or increase existing funding levels of the regional and local park agencies in the Ridgeland for acquisition, development and maintenance.
6. Public park agencies in the Ridgeland should link up existing park units by establishing trail corridors for hiking and riding use. These trail corridors should be planned and designed so as to minimize the adverse impact on adjacent privately-owned lands.
7. Park and recreation and other public land managing agencies with holdings in the Ridgeland should coordinate their planning and acquisition programs with each other so as to more effectively serve park, recreation and open space needs.
8. Park and recreation agencies in the Ridgeland, in consultation with the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, should make available information describing the potential tax benefits available to landowners through gift or sale at less than fair market value to a public park and recreation agency.
9. Park and recreation and other public land managing agencies in the Ridgeland should increase their public information, education, signing and patrol programs so as to reduce trespass and vandalism problems on adjacent private lands.
10. Public access for outdoor recreation on publicly-owned non-park open space lands shall be allowed, provided such use is not incompatible with the primary purpose for which these lands are managed.
11. Lands in public ownership in the Ridgeland should be protected by the public agency owning them rather than by imposing special restrictions on adjacent privately held lands.

## *Other Recommendations*

1. Farm Advisors, Agricultural Commissions and the U.S.

Department of Agriculture's Soil Conservation Service should work with ranchers and public land managers to help assure that land management is consistent with good conservation practices.

2. Mineral extraction, if it is to take place in the Ridgeland, should occur in a manner which will not impact substantially upon recreational and agricultural uses. Where such activities are allowed, reclamation should occur progressively with mining and be consistent with the State Surface Mining and Reclamation Act and local policies for the Ridgeland.
3. Local plans and programs should be consistent with regional resource concerns as expressed in the Association of Bay Area Governments Regional Plan and detailed in its "Areas of Critical Environmental Concern" report.
4. The Association of Bay Area Governments should delineate regionally significant areas of critical environmental concern in the Ridgeland.
5. Local and regional agencies should continue to cooperate in discussion of issues of mutual concern affecting the Ridgeland.
6. With respect to government's role in the management of private agricultural lands, government should encourage good management practices but should not interfere with private activities unless resources are threatened.
7. Consideration should be given by local governments to provide ranch and farm lands protection from vandalism and trespass, in as much as owners of such lands presently are likely to be taxed for more services than they receive.

#### State of California:

1. Legislation should be enacted enabling Local Agency Formation Commissions to review proposed formation of special assessment and improvement districts by county boards of supervisors.
2. Legislation should be enacted to provide Alameda and Santa Clara Counties with the powers to regulate proposed developments on lands owned by the San Francisco Water Department which would negatively impact open space resource values of the Ridgeland.

3. The State should continue to implement its acquisition plans for Mount Diablo and Henry W. Coe State Parks.
4. The Open Space Easement Act of 1974 should be amended to provide for subvention payments to local governments by the State.
5. The State should conduct a comprehensive study of inequities in the taxation of agricultural lands.

## *Appendix*




The following is a list of open space functions which the California Legislature wanted covered in the open space plans of local government:

- (1) Open space for the preservation of natural resources, including, but not limited to, areas required for the preservation of plant and animal life, including habitat for fish and wildlife species; areas required for the ecologic and other scientific study purposes; rivers, streams, bays and estuaries; and coastal beaches, lakeshores, banks of rivers and streams, and watershed lands.
- (2) Open space used for the managed production of resources, including, but not limited to, forest lands, rangeland, agricultural lands and areas of economic importance for the production of food or fiber; areas required for recharge of ground water basins; bays, estuaries, marshes, rivers and streams which are important for the management of commercial fisheries; and areas containing major mineral deposits, including those in short supply.
- (3) Open space for outdoor recreation, including, but not limited to, areas of outstanding scenic, historic and cultural value; areas particularly suited for park and recreation purposes, including access to lakeshores, beaches, and rivers and streams; and areas which serve as links between major recreation and open-space reservations, including utility easements, banks of rivers and streams, trails, and scenic highway corridors.
- (4) Open space for public health and safety, including, but not limited to, areas which require special management or regulation because of hazardous or special conditions such as earthquake fault zones, unstable soil areas, flood plains, watersheds, areas presenting high fire risks, areas required for the protection of water quality and water reservoirs and areas required for the protection and enhancement of air quality.





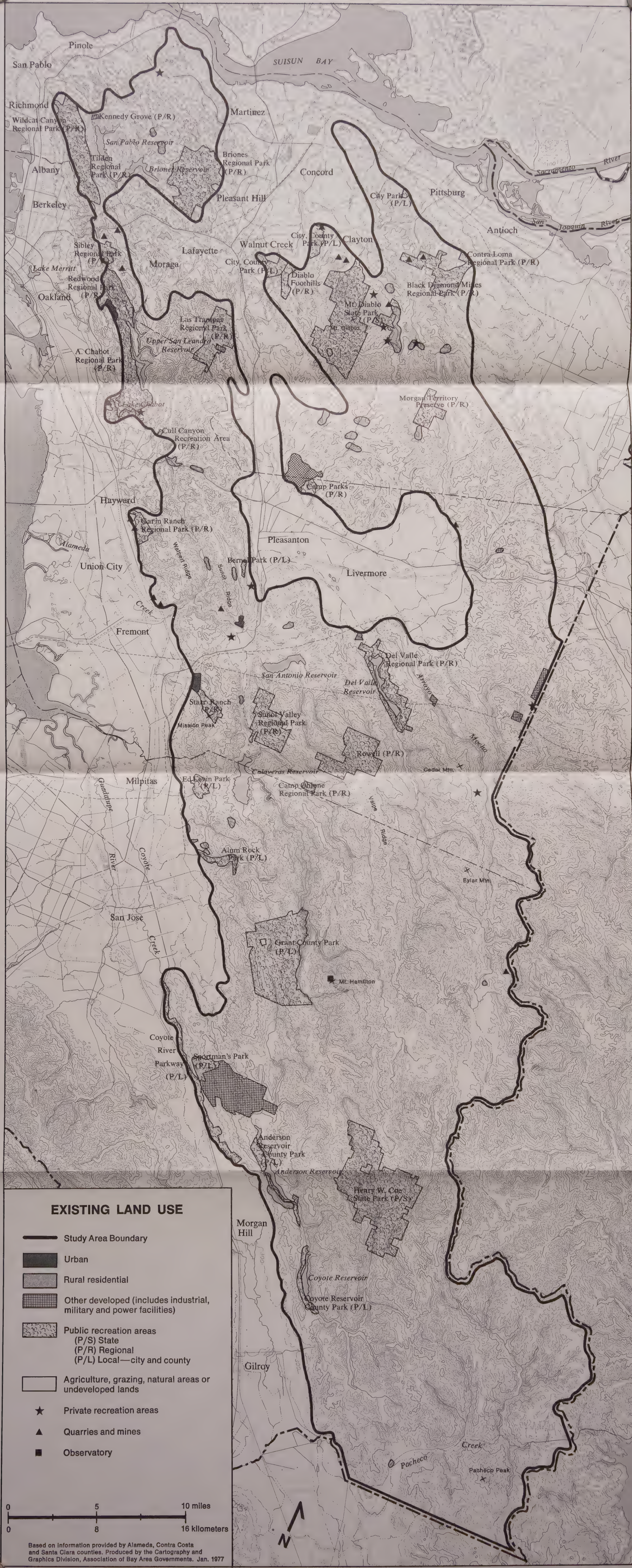
## COMPOSITE OF PROTECTED LANDS

-  Study Area Boundary
-  Publicly Owned Open Space Lands
-  Lands Under Williamson Act Contract

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0 8 16 kilometers

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









## LANDS UNDER WILLIAMSON ACT CONTRACT

-  Study Area Boundary
-  Lands under Williamson Act Contract

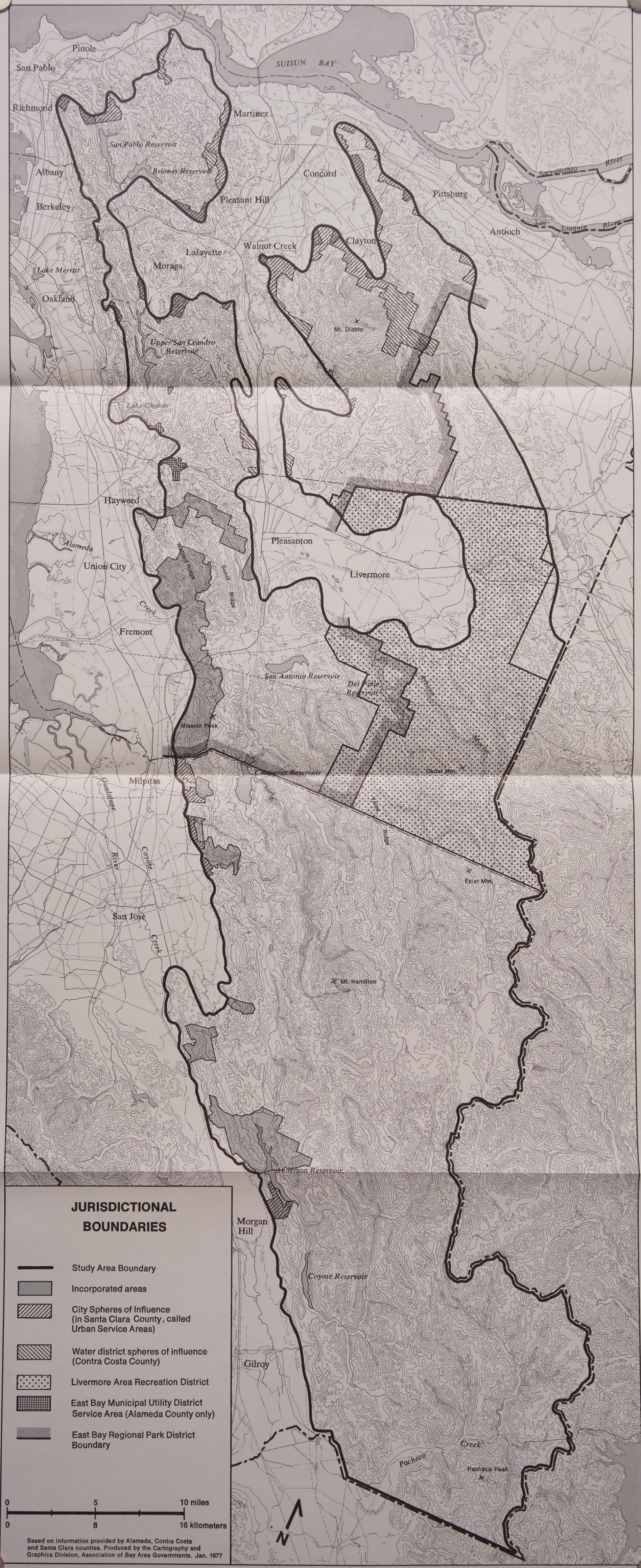
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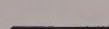



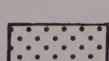

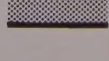








## JURISDICTIONAL BOUNDARIES

-  Study Area Boundary
-  Incorporated areas
-  City Spheres of Influence (in Santa Clara County, called Urban Service Areas)
-  Water district spheres of influence (Contra Costa County)
-  Livermore Area Recreation District
-  East Bay Municipal Utility District Service Area (Alameda County only)
-  East Bay Regional Park District Boundary

0 5 10 miles  
0 8 16 kilometers

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